



**United Nations Development Programme**  
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# **The MDGs as a Communication Tool for Development**

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## Abstract



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This paper intends to look at the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a communication tool instead of an object of communication. The MDGs possess the potential to make development more understandable to people at the centre of development policies: the poor, vulnerable and socially excluded. The potential to make development interventions more effective and, ultimately, to achieve the MDGs, lies in improving the capability of these people to use information about development to claim their rights and to hold authorities accountable for their commitments.

Based on the available literature and international conventions, the paper will elaborate a framework for the application of communication for development in promoting the MDGs at the country level. The framework will be used to examine the Albanian experience in using the MDGs to mobilize participation around national and local development strategies. It will also highlight the contribution that communication can make in Serbia to the social inclusion of marginalized groups such as Roma, refugees, internally displaced persons and people with disabilities.

The proposed framework can be used to identify gaps, opportunities and entry points in each country. It can help make the best use of the MDGs at the national level through including excluded groups in the policy debate, which will enhance transparency, accountability and responsiveness to their needs.

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## Contents

<b>Introduction: How Communication Matters to the MDGs</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Communication for Development: Theoretical framework</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 The international communication for development discourse and normative framework	8
1.2 How the MDGs fit with communication for development	10
1.3 Key features of communication for development	13
<b>2. Communication for Development and the MDGs in Transition Countries</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1 The Albanian Case	17
<b>3. Applying Communication for Development in Serbia</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 Background to communication in Serbia	21
3.2 Inclusive communication: refugees, Roma and people with disabilities	23
3.3 Recommendations: Communicating the MDGs in Serbia	34
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Annexes</b>	<b>39</b>
Annex 1 – The MDG Monitoring Framework and the Role of Communication	39
Annex 2 – Communication Initiatives Related to the Serbian MDG Agenda	42
<b>References</b>	<b>49</b>

## Introduction: How Communication Matters to the MDGs

The United Nations Millennium Declaration is an attempt to address previous inconsistencies and inefficiencies of the development agenda, by setting clear and shared principles and priorities: the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>1</sup>.

### Box 1 » The MDGs

- MDG 1** Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- MDG 2** Achieve universal primary education
- MDG 3** Promote gender equality and empower women
- MDG 4** Reduce child mortality
- MDG 5** Improve maternal health
- MDG 6** Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- MDG 7** Ensure environmental sustainability
- MDG 8** Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Although there is no goal or target for democratic governance, the Millennium Declaration recognizes good governance as a fundamental prerequisite to achieve the MDGs.

Any governance system includes a supply side and a demand side. If democratic governance is considered the best available interpretation of good governance, the supply side includes setting, enforcing and monitoring laws, rules and regulations; ensuring government policies are put into practice effectively, transparently and honestly; delivering public services efficiently in ways that meet people's needs; creating the conditions for investment and trade to promote growth in jobs and incomes; and allocating resources and distributing wealth. The demand side of democratic governance requires "competent citizens", i.e., individuals who can participate in political processes and policy debates, and hold their governments accountable<sup>2</sup>.

In democratic governance systems, the crucial role of communication is to match supply and demand in governance. On the demand side, communication can help citizens to amplify their voices and participate in public debates, articulating their needs and concerns. On the supply side, participation enables better-informed policymaking that truly responds to those needs and concerns. Improving the flow of information on policy implementation and monitoring can enhance transparency and empower citizens to hold policy makers accountable.

Once adapted to the national and local context, the MDG framework has the potential to function as a communication for development tool. At the same time, enhancing public dialogue about development goals can contribute to their achievement. The MDGs concentrate on a few key developmental priorities that can be understood and identified easily by everyone, including those who are socially excluded<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, the MDGs establish clear, numerical and time-bound targets, with relevant indicators intended to easily measure progress towards

<sup>1</sup> Detailed information about the MDGs and the Millennium Declaration are available at <http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> See PANOS, "The Case for Communication in Sustainable Development", pp 19-22

<sup>3</sup> Many terms have been used in literature and policymaking to indicate the people who are the object of poverty reduction interventions: poor, marginalized, vulnerable or socially excluded groups, etc. Since the focus of this paper is communication as a means to actively involve these people into the policy debate, the terms marginalized or socially excluded will be mostly used. This choice has been made to emphasize the role of societal structures in marginalizing and excluding certain groups within society and the potential role of communication to change these structures and make society more inclusive.

them, fostering accountability. As the “No Excuse” campaign says, “We know what to do. We know when to do it. We know who should do it. We have adequate resources. We can monitor progress – There is no excuse not to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals”<sup>4</sup>.

The MDGs were conceived to be easily communicated to all those with a stake in the development process. This audience includes the donor community, governments and policy makers responsible at the national and local level, as well as the poor and socially excluded populations who stand to benefit from achievement of the goals.

Communication matters for achieving the MDGs because marginalized people can participate in policy debates only if they are fully aware of development goals and their implications. MDG global advocacy calls for international and domestic institutions’ accountability to deliver development results. MDG targets must be customized to the national context, however, because inclusion happens at this level. And, for the MDGs to be meaningful to marginalized populations, these people must be able to speak about national and local priorities. The first step is to translate global MDGs into national priorities through participatory processes. This presents an important opportunity for the MDGs to become an instrument to communicate about development. The second step is to build the capacities of socially excluded people to use the MDGs to claim their entitlements and remind duty-bearers of their responsibilities.

But what does MGD advocacy look like? In 2004, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published *The Blue Book: A hands-on approach to advocating for the Millennium Development Goals*<sup>5</sup>. It is “not just for communications officers” but for everyone at UNDP, as its introduction states: “The Blue Book provides a basic understanding of communication and advocacy, and the tools to help you to educate, advocate, facilitate dialogue and create partnerships and coalitions.” It is a relevant tool to prepare media and advocacy campaigns, yet more consistent and comprehensive efforts are necessary. The challenge is to include communication in all MDG-related interventions and to use the MDGs to improve a two-way flow of communication between excluded groups and policy makers. This paper is advocating for a more systematic use of the MDG agenda as a communication for development tool, exploiting UNDP partnerships with governments and civil society and its work in the neediest communities.

#### Box 2 » Communication & Participation

*“Success in achieving the MDGs and the broader millennium agenda will be determined in large part by how well national planning processes are informed and by the genuine participation and involvement of those most affected by development. UNDP believes that information and communication focused interventions are central in bringing about such participation”*

Source: UNDP-BDP, 2006, page 6

4 Campaigning Toolkit for Civil Society Organisations engaged in the Millennium Development Goals, published by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation and Millennium Development Goals Campaign Office, <http://www.civicus.org/mdg/title.htm>

5 The Blue Book is available online at: <http://www.undp.or.id/mdg/documents/The%20Blue%20Book%20A%20Hands%20on%20Approach%20to%20Advocating%20for%20the%20MDGs.pdf>

6

Part One provides a brief overview of the communication for development paradigm, including its relevance vis-à-vis international conventions and the human rights agenda, and ultimately for the achievement of the MDGs. This section aims to distill the key features of communication for development that are applied in subsequent sections.

Part Two describes how communication for development was applied in Albania to promote the MDG agenda at the national and local level. Best practices and lessons learned from this example can provide suggestions on how to apply the same paradigm elsewhere.

Part Three analyses how the MDGs can help promote participatory and inclusive policymaking in Serbia.

The choice of Albania and Serbia is not accidental. It is the general impression in many countries in Eastern Europe that the MDG agenda is irrelevant to their national priorities. During the transition phase with its focus on building democratic institutions and market economies, however, they underestimated the emerging pockets of poverty and marginalization.

The annexes include the global MDG monitoring frameworks and communication initiatives related to the Serbian MDG agenda, to exemplify the links between each target and potential communication initiatives.

## 1. Communication for Development: Theoretical framework

The following paragraphs provide a brief and far from exhaustive summary of the evolution of communication within development theories<sup>6</sup>. In the aftermath of the Second World War, modernization theories proposed a top-down approach assuming that mass media could transform traditional societies into modern societies, more similar to those of developed countries. The aim of communication was one-way transmission of information, where the information provider would set the agenda to persuade people to change behaviour.

In the 1970s, proponents of information dissemination and of health promotion reviewed their assumptions. They accounted for the influence of culture and tradition on social change, experimenting with new mixes of social marketing and entertainment known as “edutainment”. The aim was to convey the right messages in the most efficient way to produce the desired social change. This approach took into account the characteristics of the recipients of information, but only for the purpose of shaping the content of information packages; it did not propose interaction.

In 1980, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) released a report, *Many Voices, One World*<sup>7</sup>. It revealed an alarming concentration of media control and influence in rich countries, and noted the irrelevance of news agencies and mass media based in Africa, Asia or Latin America. Around this time, development communication theories started to emphasize the need for two-way knowledge and information flows between communities and technocrats, valuing local knowledge and promoting the respect of local cultures, rather than one-way transfer of knowledge. This would require all those involved in dialogue and debate to participate in setting the communication agenda.

This approach contributed to the evolution of “communication for social change”, which puts people in control of the means and contents of communication. The basic assumption is that people understand their realities better than any “expert” from outside their societies. The essential characteristics of communication for social change are: community ownership and participation, language and cultural relevance, creating local content, using appropriate technology to meet the real needs of the people and which can be owned and controlled by the people, and learning sharing among networks of people with similar concerns<sup>8</sup>.

Building on this debate, UNDP has codified the concept of “communication for empowerment”<sup>9</sup>. It leverages access to information and two-way communication mechanisms to allow marginalized people to voice their needs and opinions and participate in decision-making affecting their lives. The underlying principles are that communities should own the development process, and that the lack of voice is an element of poverty<sup>10</sup>.

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6 For a more detailed analysis, see Gamucio-Dragon and Tufte, 2006

7 The “MacBride report” available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0004/000400/040066eb.pdf>

8 See Gamucio-Dragon and Tufte, 2006, pages XX and XXI

9 For additional information, see UNDP-BDP, 2006

10 This paper will use the term communication for development and not communication for empowerment, since the former is the official term used in most international declarations, and empowerment could have power-relations implications that are difficult to assess.

8 Contemporary debate about communication is concerned with the “information society” and places Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) at the centre of a new revolution in communication. ICT has the potential to convey an unlimited amount of information to extended and interactive networks worldwide, which is why its supporters identify ICT as the ultimate means to democratize information flows; detractors point to the challenges of the “digital divide”, the disparity between rich and poor countries in ICT access.

### 1.1 The international communication for development discourse and normative framework

The fundamentals of the concept of communication for development within the United Nations system are found in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>11</sup>: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

In 1994, the United Nations General Assembly commissioned a Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) to recommend ways to better integrate communication in the work of United Nations agencies. Based on JIU recommendations, the General Assembly passed two resolutions on communication for development in the United Nations system<sup>12</sup>. 10th UN Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development<sup>13</sup> advocated a common strategy on the MDGs, with the theme “Towards a Common UN System Approach for Harnessing Communication for Development to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals”<sup>14</sup>. The proceedings of the round table recognized the need for communication systems, stating that “the commitments encompassed in the eight Millennium Development Goals demand communication systems and processes that enable dialogue and allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns, and participate in the decisions that relate to their development.” The round table also noted a need for focus in planning when it expressed concerns “about the lack of appreciation among many development institutions of the need to include communication for development principles and methodologies at all stages of the development process and to allocate resources for that purpose.”

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11 For the Universal Declaration of Human Rights online, see <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

12 Resolution 50/130 in 1995, and resolution 51/172 in 1996

13 Additional information about the history of the Round Tables is available at [http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=21370&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=21370&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

14 For additional information about the 10th Round Table and related document, consult: [http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=23422&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=23422&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

### Box 3 » 8th Round Table

**The 8th Round Table on Communication for Development identified three approaches:**

- 1 Behaviour Change Communication: intended to empower individuals and enable communities to make informed choices.
- 2 Communication for Social Change: based on participatory and voice-amplifying strategies that emphasise dialogue and process
- 3 Advocacy communication: organized efforts, including by coalitions and networks, to influence policy decisions, public perceptions and social norms.

A number of international documents promote the concept of communication for development and relate it to the MDGs:

- *Delivering as One*<sup>15</sup>, the November 2006 Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel, promotes participatory policy dialogue and responsiveness;
- *The Rome Consensus*<sup>16</sup>, from the World Congress on Communication for Development in October 2006, highlights the need to "strengthen the communication for development capacity within countries and organizations at all levels";
- *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*<sup>17</sup> of March 2005, promotes national ownership to be achieved through participatory policy dialogue;
- The Bellagio Statement on the Role of Communication in Meeting the Millennium Development Goals<sup>18</sup> of November 2004 advocates for a "new strategic thinking about meeting the MDGs" based on "effective communication [that] can no longer be seen as information dissemination alone...forums for public discussion can build support for the MDGs and produce social energy to achieve them".

International organizations could not ignore the rapid development of communication technologies and its impact on the lives of millions of people, including the poor (e.g., the rapid diffusion of mobile telephony has facilitated horizontal people-to-people communication). At the same time, the digital divide is of growing importance. This disparity in ICT access between rich and poor countries, and between rich and poor within countries, risks creating new layers of inequalities. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)<sup>19</sup> confirmed that ICT can deliver a range of services, from better market functioning to improved provision of social services, from expanding the voices of communities to bridging social divides. For ICT to deliver on these expectations, however, adequate policies must ensure universal access to the benefits of technology.

15 The report is available online at <http://www.un.org/events/panel/resources/pdfs/HLP-SWC-FinalReport.pdf>

16 For additional information on the Rome Consensus, consult [http://www.uneca.org/africanmedia/documents/Recommendations\\_Rome\\_Consensus.pdf](http://www.uneca.org/africanmedia/documents/Recommendations_Rome_Consensus.pdf)

17 For additional information on the Paris Declaration consult [http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,2340,en\\_2649\\_3236398\\_35401554\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,2340,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html)

18 In 2004, representatives of bilateral and multilateral agencies gathered in Bellagio, Italy, to discuss the role of communication in meeting the MDGs. The statement is available online at <http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/actionplanmdgmeetingnov04.pdf>

19 The World Summit on the Information Society was endorsed by UN General Assembly resolution 56/183. For more information, see <http://www.itu.int/wsis>

10 A definition of communication for development is found in the United Nations resolution 51/172: “The General Assembly... Stresses the need to support two-way communication systems that enable dialogue and that allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns, and participate in the decisions that relate to their development”<sup>20</sup>. All official documents reiterate that communication is intended as an amplifier of voice, a facilitator of participation, and a means of fostering social change. Development agencies should not see it as a downstream public relation or dissemination function.

Based on these international instruments, this paper will treat information circulation as the starting point for effective two-way or multi-way communication flows, and participatory policy-making as the communication tool to impact development. In the next section, this concept is linked to the MDG agenda.

## 1.2 How the MDGs fit with communication for development

From a human rights-based perspective, achieving the MDGs requires the identification of rights-holders (people entitled to claim civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights) and duty-bearers (institutions that are responsible to ensure the respect of these rights). People have the right to escape poverty, access health and education, and ensure environmental sustainability to future generations. Women in particular have the right to be treated equally. UNESCO and UNDP agree that communication is crucial to “improve the capacity of people – particularly marginalized people – to articulate their perspectives freely and communicate them in ways that will attract attention and demand respect. The ability of people to understand what policies are shaping their lives depends on information being made available or at least accessible to them”<sup>21</sup>.

The MDGs envisage a systematic application of communication for development methodologies at the country level to build constituencies around a national development agenda in which all citizens, including those who are marginalized, can identify their priorities, improving national ownership and accountability.

The information and communication circle below demonstrates how access to information can increase the demand for better governance and by so doing perpetuate its own demand. Each box in the circle requires the development of communication capacities for generating, accessing and analyzing information that will generate public dialogue and promote democratic governance principles of transparency, active participation, and responsiveness and accountability<sup>22</sup>.

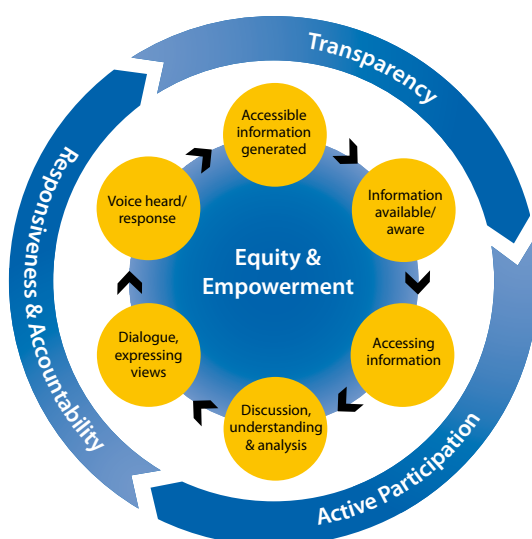
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20 General Assembly resolution 51/172 Article 6, see <http://www.un.org/ga/documents/gares51/ga51-172.htm>

21 See UNESCO & UNDP, 2007, page 43

22 UNDP, *Access to Information*, page 5

**Figure 1**  
The communication  
and information circle

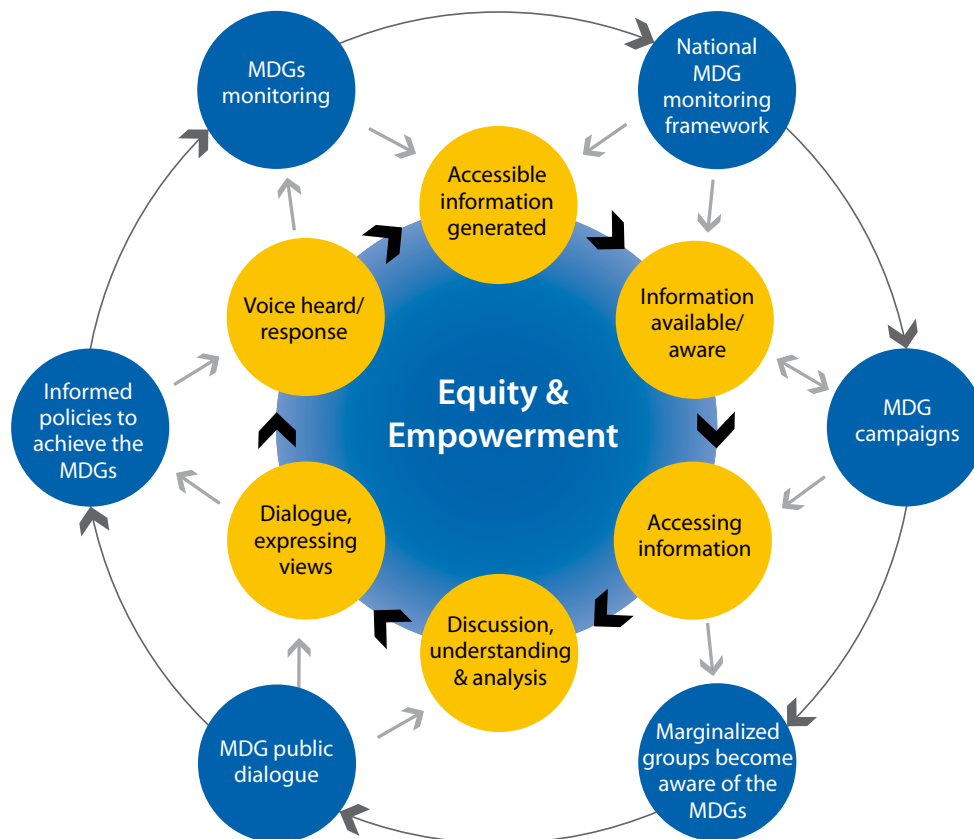


It is possible to expand the circle and apply it to MDG monitoring at the country level. Accessible information must be generated to establish MDG monitoring frameworks reflecting a country's developmental priorities. In some cases, this is a simple process of gathering and systematizing already available data and information. In other cases, however, it will be necessary to collect and generate additional information to ensure an adequate analysis of the main human development dimensions at the national and local level, including disaggregated data for marginalized groups<sup>23</sup>. At the same time, this information must be accessible to a large number of stakeholders, including the socially excluded, to achieve consensus about national developmental priorities. This requires setting clear targets and transparent plans to achieve them, and making these known to a wide public so that citizens can follow progress and understand constraints. MDG campaigns can help raise awareness about the MDG national agenda.

Once the MDGs have entered the public debate, a number of stakeholders must engage in stimulating public discussion to deepen the understanding and analysis of the country's priorities. Such stakeholders include governmental counterparts, civil society, the business community and international organizations. This would lead to a national dialogue on what actions and interventions are necessary to achieve the MDGs. If all citizens, including the marginalized, are enabled to have their voices heard, national policies will be better informed and they will better respond to actual needs. Participatory monitoring of MDG-based policies can support their implementation by calling attention to the need for corrective action to be taken whenever the targets are not on track, or by identifying innovative ways to reach specific targets. Such monitoring involves the communities that are supposed to benefit from these policies. Monitoring requires an increased capacity of citizens to follow, assess and respond to government performance. These skills are essential to active participation in policy debate, and can be generated through the process. Regular monitoring of achievements vis-à-vis the MDGs will generate new and updated information that can be used continually to raise awareness and feed the national debate. Hence, the communication and information cycle above can be expanded as follows:

<sup>23</sup> More information on how to construct adequate MDG indicators can be found at [http://www.undg.org/archive\\_docs/7759-Indicators\\_for\\_Policy\\_Management\\_Practical\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.undg.org/archive_docs/7759-Indicators_for_Policy_Management_Practical_Guide.pdf)

**Figure 2**  
**MDG monitoring and the communication and information circle**



Applying the communication for development approach to the MDGs generates opportunities to foster participatory policymaking. Participation requires skills and resources, and it often appears more convenient to delegate decision-making to experts or representatives of certain constituencies (e.g., political parties, trade unions, employers' organizations and other civil society organizations). This can be appropriate as long as all constituencies with a stake in the policy are properly represented, and if transparent information-sharing and media coverage guarantee to raise awareness about the process and its implications. A wide range of communication tools is required for meaningful participatory processes. The tools are required to extend participation beyond those who are physically present at meetings and debates, and to legitimize representatives to speak on behalf of their constituencies. It is therefore crucial to consider consensus-building structures existing in the country. This ensures that the voices of socially excluded people and local communities are heard, and prevents any potential lack of sensitivity towards marginalized groups.

Other mechanisms to improve access to decision-making are implicit in the principle of subsidiarity, whereby decentralized structures ensure that decisions are made as close as possible to those who are concerned, since policies ultimately affect the local level, and local circumstances and issues are the bulk of people's interests, understanding and practices. In many countries, regional disparities and diversity require targeted policies that integrate this diversity. Different areas, for example, can be affected by different environmental circumstances and present different challenges in terms of poverty reduction or access to health and education services. It is fundamental that local-level debates are informed by national policies and trends, and that national policies respond to concerns raised in local debates. This creates multi-way communication flows between citizens and policy makers, and between the central administration and the local context, whereby local self-governments and community-based organizations can serve as intermediaries.

This section has focused on how communication, in particular access to information and participatory policy dialogue, is vital to the MDG monitoring process. The next section will address how the MDG communication circle can function in practice.

### 1.3 Key features of communication for development

For UNDP, communication for development is about providing a voice for marginalized groups to communicate their perspectives, a space to engage in public dialogue, and a channel to communicate information to the most affected people, and to feed back their perspectives to those in authority. This section intends to summarise the key elements<sup>24</sup> of a country-tailored MDG advocacy campaign that aims to go beyond promotional messages and include marginalized **people** in development processes.

An effective MDG campaign is based on an understanding of the communication flow that affects the lives of those who are marginalized in a specific context<sup>25</sup>. **Communication audits** should be carried out to assess the information needed by marginalised groups, the mechanisms by which their voices are heard, and their most accessible source of information at local, national and international levels (e.g., radio, television, ICT and printed materials as well as theatre, storytelling and other traditional community media). Political risks in dealing with communication must be carefully analysed. In conflict or post-conflict settings, for example, both infrastructural and political obstacles can undermine communication for development. The presence of media, even when liberalized, is not sufficient if they are not engaged and capable of reaching and reflecting the perspectives of all citizens.

**Access to development information** must be provided to marginalized groups for the MDGs to be meaningful. This must be done through formats and communication channels that they can easily understand and use<sup>26</sup>. The main function of the MDGs in this context is to translate the national development agenda into messages that marginalized populations can receive and fully comprehend, and to generate relevant and localized information to encourage their involvement.

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<sup>25</sup> For a detailed methodology of information audits at the country level, see UNDP-BDP, 2006, pp 23-32

<sup>26</sup> In 2007, UNDP supported 279 access to information initiatives in 60 countries, more information is available at <http://undp.botterli.com/default.aspx>

An effective MDG campaign must **amplify the voice of marginalized groups** by ensuring that their views are expressed and properly presented in the media, which will also raise awareness among policy makers and trigger response. The “watch dog” functions of civil society and the media must be freely exercised to improve accountability by those in positions of authority, respecting the highest professional standards and avoiding libel and sensationalism. It is important to develop the capacity of communities and vulnerable populations to analyse information and communicate views to policy makers; this is just as important as developing the capacity of central and local governments to monitor, record and respond to feedback.

Subjecting policy initiatives to informed scrutiny and **public debate** is the core of communication for development. The MDGs can provide marginalized groups with opportunities to bring to public attention their concerns and perceptions. They can create spaces for public dialogue, placing those most affected at the heart of the debate.

Communication for development will only feature in **development programmes** if questions related to it are asked throughout the programming cycle, starting with the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the elaboration of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). According to CCA and UNDAF guidelines<sup>27</sup>, at a minimum, a high-quality country analysis will “involve non-government stakeholders, and ensure the active and meaningful participation of groups subjected to discrimination, including the poor, women, indigenous peoples, displaced people and migrants”. MDG advocacy efforts applying the tools of communication for development can leverage greater support if they refer to official development documents co-signed by the United Nations and the government. Each communication for development initiative should allow monitoring and evaluation. An MDG campaign should include indicators to measure its impact and outreach results not only in terms of increased media coverage of developmental issues, but also increased representation of the perspectives of marginalized groups in public debates, policy changes generated by those debates, and the effective use of information by those groups.

Lack of awareness of the potential contribution of communication to the MDGs is a noteworthy **constraint** in moving from theory to praxis. UNESCO and UNDP argue:

...[the] omission of Communication for Development from the 2005 Millennium Project Overview Report, intended as a practical guide to achieving the MDGs, is telling. Other major policy documents, norms and standards also mirror the lack of recognition and prioritisation. As a result, governments and development agencies have not been able to exploit the value-added of communication, and the potential of media and other forms of communication to help bring about social change remains largely untapped and underutilised”<sup>28</sup>.

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27 Updated UN system CCA and UNDAF guidelines are available at <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=226#s2>

28 UNESCO & UNDP 2007, page 20

Because communication is not recognized as a priority, communication needs assessments are rare. If they are not envisaged in the programme design stage, it is difficult to allocate time and resources to these exercises. The impact of communication can be jeopardized by not having accurate information about the needs of the counterparts and by the reliability of available tools<sup>29</sup>. Experience in monitoring and evaluating the impact of communication initiatives is comparatively weak, leading to the re-use of formats and campaigns regardless of their effectiveness in improving the conditions of marginalized groups. These two constraints are interlinked, since only with an upfront adequate information baseline it is possible to measure changes resulting from improved information.

Another constraint is represented by the complexity of the communication flow. The need to translate policies into various languages and formats and to hold repeated consultations to hear all voices can make participatory policymaking too expensive and lengthy for use in developing countries, or when there is pressure to accelerate the pace of reform. Representation through civil society organizations (CSO) may reduce the number of people involved in the policy debate, yet it raises issues of transparent selection. One issue is how representative selected organizations actually are in relation to marginalized groups.

Table 1.1 presents a summary of the key features of the communication for development approach. The list is broad enough to accommodate different circumstances (e.g., access to information legislation might exist, but not the custom or practice of participatory policy debate). Later in this paper, this table will be applied as an analytical framework to experiences in Albania and Serbia. The aim is to identify concrete applications of communication for development to foster the MDG agenda at the national and local level, with a focus on vulnerable groups.

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29 In 2007, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre started a pilot of information and communication audits in four countries. For additional information contact [oslogovcentre@undp.org](mailto:oslogovcentre@undp.org)

30 For more information on Civic Education practices, consult UNDP-BDP, 2004

<b>Table 1.1 Communication for Development Key Features</b>	
<b>Communication needs assessments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Marginalized groups' information needs</li> <li>– People's opportunities and capacities to participate in public debates</li> <li>– Understand the media environment</li> </ul>
<b>Improve access to information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Strengthen the legal and regulatory environment for freedom and pluralism of information</li> <li>– Improve capacity, networking and standards of media at national and local levels to foster independent and pluralistic information</li> <li>– Raise awareness on rights to official information</li> <li>– Strengthen communication mechanisms for marginalized groups and their skills to understand the development discourse</li> <li>– Strengthen mechanisms to access information, including through ICT</li> <li>– Promote transparency to ensure accountability</li> </ul>
<b>Amplify the voice of marginalized groups and ensure response mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Use media and advocacy to amplify marginalized voices</li> <li>– Increase journalists' and editors' awareness of and capacity to report on social exclusion issues, and to promote cultural diversity</li> <li>– Strengthen civil society watch dog functions</li> <li>– Support community (or marginalized groups) ownership of media, to guarantee an unrestricted space to voice their views</li> <li>– Use ICT to establish interactive information exchange mechanisms</li> <li>– Strengthen participatory monitoring and evaluation of national policies</li> </ul>
<b>Support to public debates on national policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Promote parliamentary public hearings and participatory policymaking initiatives at both central and local level</li> <li>– Encourage media to promote discussion</li> <li>– Promote a vibrant civil society and decentralized patterns of communication</li> <li>– Establish civic education initiatives to enhance civic knowledge, civic disposition and civic skills and promote participation in public life</li> <li>– Reduce the digital divide</li> <li>– Use MDG reports and UNDP National Human Development Reports to generate debate about national development priorities</li> </ul>
<b>Incorporate communication for development in UN programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ensure participation of national stakeholders (both government representatives and civil society organizations) in the preparation of CCA and UNDAF</li> <li>– CCA containing communication needs assessment</li> <li>– UNDAF reflecting communication for development principles (access to information, support to public debates, voices of marginalized groups)</li> <li>– Include marginalized groups in UN advocacy efforts</li> <li>– Developmental programmes linked to a nationally tailored MDG agenda</li> <li>– Promote monitoring and evaluation of communication and advocacy initiatives</li> </ul>

## 2. Communication for Development and the MDGs in Transition Countries

The promotion of the MDGs in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) placed emphasis on translating the global MDG agenda into national targets and indicators to increase their relevance at the country level. Considerable progress in health and education during the socialist regimes contributed to a general impression that countries had already achieved the MDGs. The view was that the political agenda should be focused exclusively on transition reforms towards democratic institutions and market economies, but this view underestimated the impact of transition on social policies and socially excluded groups<sup>31</sup>. The response is to customize MDG monitoring frameworks. Such frameworks include new and/or additional targets and indicators, sometimes disaggregated along several categories, which can help determine and monitor development policies relevant to country priorities, and align the MDGs with other regional developmental agendas, such as the European Union Social Inclusion Agenda<sup>32</sup>, while preserving the overarching principles of improving accountability and efficiency.

Countries in Europe and the CIS customized the MDGs at the national level with varied degrees of public debate and participation in different countries, following the uneven pace of transition to democratic governance. In some countries, for example, participation and information sharing were perceived as cumbersome processes slowing down reforms with limited value added. In general, accountability mechanisms were often not effective where civil society was weak and fragmented. As a result, seven years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, the public is often unaware of their existence. This is especially among poor and vulnerable groups. Professionals working for the media are usually unfamiliar with the MDG agenda, and media coverage of the goals is infrequent and inadequate. The challenge is therefore to identify and institutionalize mechanisms that ensure real and meaningful participation and improve overall transparency without being excessively cumbersome.

Can the MDG agenda become an instrument of communication for development in transition countries? And if so, is UNDP equipped to use it in a way that can maximize its benefits? This section presents the approach to the MDGs adopted by UNDP in Albania, reviewing it according to the previously identified elements of communication for development.

### 2.1 The Albanian case

Well-documented<sup>33</sup> experience in Albania demonstrates how the principles of communication for development can be incorporated in the national MDG agenda, and how the MDG platform is suited to the promotion of participatory policy-making. The Government of Albania, in partnership with UNDP and other United Nations agencies succeeded through the MDGs to link global priorities to national and local ones, and steps have been taken to harmonize the achievement of the MDGs with other national goals such as integration with the European Union. Table 2.1 shows the steps taken to communicate the MDGs in Albania, and how this action is related to the communication for development approach promoted by UNDP. The Albanian example represents a best practice in the application of communication for development, although it does not include a communication needs assessment or evaluation.

31 For more information about the customization of MDGs at the national level in Europe and the CIS, see UNDP – RBEC, 2006

32 More information about links and synergies between the MDGs and the EU social inclusion agenda can be found at <http://mdgr.undp.sk/>

33 Detailed information about MDG-related activities in Albania are available at the webpage: [http://www.undp.org.al/index.php?page=MDG/mdg\\_albania](http://www.undp.org.al/index.php?page=MDG/mdg_albania)

The approach to the MDGs focused on improving access to development information. It was recognized that citizens must become familiar with development priorities and trends, which are often perceived as something detached from everyday life of interest only in the realm of bureaucrats and technocrats, in order to become involved in policy dialogue at the local and national level. Extensive consultations to finalize the national MDG agenda produced a wealth of information, which enabled many stakeholders to provide feedback. The same happened when the process was transferred at the local level, which generated demand for additional context-specific information.

During this process, UNDP Albania made full use of the MDGs as a tool that national stakeholders could use to discuss, prioritize and advocate for development at the local and national level. UNDP fostered strong partnerships with elected authorities, civil society organizations, the private sector and the media. The process brought local content into the global MGD agenda and promoted consultative and participatory policy-making practices. The strength of the Albanian approach was to showcase the added value of public debates to generate sound national and local policies.

Another process also has been instrumental in ensuring that the MDGs remain at the centre of the national debate in coming years: alignment of MDGs with the European Union social inclusion agenda<sup>34</sup>. It was a process that combined the apparently unrelated and overlapping development agendas of different international players, in this case the United Nations and the European Union. In so doing, it revealed their essential similarity in terms of purpose, and helped simplify the development discourse, improving its accessibility to all citizens.

The fragility of public institutions, and their weak capacities to monitor progress towards development goals, was widely recognized as a challenge to achieving the MDGs in Albania. The MDGs became a vehicle to advocate for an efficient and responsive public administration that would be capable of conducting participatory policy-making exercises at the local level, where citizens would take an active role in identifying the main development needs of their region. This advocacy was coupled with support for institutional development initiatives. The MDGs were used to build support and momentum for “bottom-up” policy-making that would assess local poverty challenges and serve as an engine for comprehensive local development.

The Albanian experience demonstrates the powerful communication potential of the MDGs. It shows how it is possible to mobilize informed consensus and trigger actions for change by concentrating on few non-controversial priorities that are easily identified by all constituencies, and by placing them in the context of the national environment. The MDGs can be a means to talk about development, to bring the discussion to the most remote areas of the country, and to involve local populations in the identification of solutions to development challenges and gaps. When properly adapted to the country’s needs, the MDGs can help foster dialogue and participation. This can create ripple effects in civic education and foster democratic governance with participatory, transparent, and accountable mechanisms – mechanisms that can be applied to other domains of policymaking.

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<sup>34</sup> The EU official definition states that “social inclusion is a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they have a greater participation in decision making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights.” See the Report on Social Inclusion 2005 by the European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/social\\_inclusion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/index_en.htm)

The key challenge ahead is to understand the long-term impact of MDG-related communication initiatives. Have participatory approaches and public debates been extended to other policymaking processes with or without the support of the international community in Albania? Has the momentum created by the MDG campaign been maintained so that Albania can achieve the same level of participation and consensus in the implementation and monitoring phases of national and local MDG-based strategies?

**Table 2.1**  
**Communication for Development in Albania**

<b>Communication needs assessments</b>	– Not available
<b>Improve access to information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Consultations for tailoring the MDGs made a wealth of development information available at both national and local level</li> <li>– Additional development information generated at the local level (disaggregated human development indexes)</li> <li>– Large opinion polls conducted to inform the public debate</li> <li>– Media training (involving journalists and editors) helped incorporate development issues in daily reporting</li> </ul>
<b>Amplify the voice of marginalized groups and ensure response mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Local NGOs conveyed the perspectives of socially excluded groups to policy makers</li> <li>– Local debates used to amplify the voice of marginalized communities outside the capital city</li> <li>– MDGs used as a vehicle to advocate for an efficient and responsive public administration (MDG-based institutional development projects)</li> <li>– DevInfo<sup>35</sup> set up at the regional level to monitor the implementation of regional development strategies</li> <li>– MDG and EU social inclusion planning system were integrated to ensure socio-economic monitoring will stay at the core of the policy debate</li> <li>– Developing needs were disaggregated to raise awareness about social exclusion and regional disparities</li> <li>– MDG Ambassadors (renown Albanian personalities<sup>36</sup>) were engaged to raise awareness about the MDGs</li> <li>– Private companies<sup>37</sup> were engaged in MDG awareness-raising</li> </ul>
<b>Support to public debates on national policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Parliamentary resolution institutionalized the MDGs as a tool to discuss, prioritize and advocate for development issues</li> <li>– Two-year consultation process identified MDG targets and indicators relevant to the Albanian context</li> <li>– MDG regional reports served as bottom-up policy-making and as a tool to steer citizens' participation at the local level</li> <li>– Local development targets aligned with national poverty reduction strategy and EU stabilization and association process</li> <li>– Volunteer "Youth Ambassadors" promoted peer education in schools to discuss development issues relevant to youth</li> </ul>
<b>Incorporate communication for development in UN programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– UNDP programmatic interventions were detailed in MDG terms on the Albania Country Office website</li> <li>– MDGs were placed at the centre of UN Development Assistance Framework for Albania</li> <li>– Regional joint MDG tours of six UN agencies were organized</li> </ul>

35 DevInfo is a user-friendly database system to organize, store and display development data in a uniform format to facilitate data sharing at country level and assist countries in MDG reporting. The 48 MDG indicators are at the core of the package, but at the local level, database administrators have the option to add their own sets of local indicators. More information can be found at <http://www.devinfo.org>

36 Opera singer Inva Mula and the photographer Fadil Berisha

37 Western Union co-funding the building of schools and providing free advocacy, and Malev Airlines printing MDG-related messages and information on their tickets' envelopes.

### 3. Applying Communication for Development in Serbia

In Serbia, the first official document to refer specifically to the Millennium Development Goals is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)<sup>38</sup> adopted by the government in 2003. The multi-sectoral analysis presented in the PRSP makes reference to the goals relevant to each sector. In 2004, the Government of Serbia established the MDG Task Force to define national development targets to be reached by 2015. This was carried out in active cooperation with civil society, the business sector, media, and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). The Task Force was engaged in an extensive consultation process, which directly involved more than 200 participants<sup>39</sup>. In 2005, the Government adopted its first MDG review, assessing trends for each of the Millennium Development Goals, while the customised MDG Monitoring Framework for Serbia was adopted in March 2007.

One of the main challenges in Serbia in tracking progress towards development goals is the existence of multiple sectoral strategies. They are not harmonized and they do not include cross-sectoral planning. The MDG Monitoring Framework was built on these strategies, but in addition it has established priorities and cross-sectoral links. It takes into consideration priorities expressed in the only two multi-sectoral strategies – the PRSP and the European Union Integration Strategy – and paves the way to the monitoring of social inclusion. National priorities are expressed in terms of country-tailored targets (e.g., unemployment reduction as the main prerequisite for poverty alleviation), and also in terms of specific targets focused on socially excluded groups.

The MDGs are now tailored to the Serbian context, yet they remain familiar only to the people who were involved in the consultation process. Major efforts are needed to turn them into an instrument for marginalized groups.

Part Three of this paper will examine how communication for development can help promote progress towards the MDGs in Serbia. This analysis does not address the entire MDG agenda as defined at the country level. Instead, the analysis will focus on refugees, internally displaced persons, Roma and people living with disabilities. These groups are identified in key strategic documents such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the MDG Monitoring Framework as the most excluded groups within the Serbian population. Communication initiatives have the potential to help their inclusion in mainstream society, promote their participation in public debates, and ultimately promote their role in forging policies that can improve their socio-economic conditions.

The next section describes the communication environment in Serbia, setting a background for understanding the potential of communication to improve the situation of socially excluded groups.

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<sup>38</sup> More information about the Serbian PRSP <http://www.prsp.sr.gov.yu/engleski/strateski.jsp>

<sup>39</sup> Information about MDG reporting in Serbia can be found at <http://www.prsp.sr.gov.yu/engleski/mcr/index.jsp>

### 3.1 Background to communication in Serbia

Information needs assessments are not common practice in Serbia. Initiatives aimed at improving access to information for marginalized groups are often based on the supply side of available information, such as compiling lists of initiatives and opportunities. They are not based on the actual demand for information. Participation mechanisms are often based on the assumption that inviting a number of NGOs to a consultation is a sufficient way to hear the voice of stakeholders. When NGOs are invited to consult, they are usually selected based on their reputation and upon recommendation, without any assessment to determine if the constituency they are supposed to represent is really standing behind their positions.

Television is considered to be the main source of information for most Serbian citizens<sup>40</sup>. Some daily newspapers and weekly magazines are distributed in most of Serbia, but only highly educated parts of society regularly read the printed press. Television, especially public television with national coverage, currently reaches larger audiences, including those living in remote areas or poor suburbs. This is view in the absence of an in-depth analysis about the impact of mass media on Serbian society.

Doubts about the ability of the media to address the issues of marginalized groups are raised in recent research on ethics in Serbian journalism, which finds:

“Serbian print media often disregard professional norms according to which journalists must not abuse people’s emotions nor their ignorance or inability to make a reasonable judgement, while at the same time they have to respect the right to privacy when reporting on disasters, suffering and pain, children, minors, sick people, family tragedies and indictees, as well as when publishing their names and photographs...”<sup>41</sup>

These remarks speak to the inadequacy of Serbian media to report about socially excluded groups, as extensively explained in the following sections of this paper.

In terms of Information and Communication Technologies, only 25.6 per cent of households own a personal computer and only 18.5 per cent have access to the Internet<sup>42</sup>. In both cases, percentages in urban areas are double compared to those in rural areas. Mostly, the households with Internet access are those with a combined income of more than 600 Euros per month (the average household monthly income in Serbia is 450 Euros), highlighting a clear digital divide. Mobile phones are more accessible to marginalized people: 70 per cent of the Serbian population owns a mobile phone, including almost 50 per cent of those with lower education, and 75 per cent of the unemployed. Slobodan Milosevic, the former Yugoslav president, demonstrated that he understood the potential of mobile phone networks when he sent propaganda messages through Serbian mobile operators. Mobile phones have not been used to facilitate access to information and social services.

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40 According to data collected by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 95.7 % of Serbian households possess a TV set, and about one third (30.2 %) has also access to cable TV. For more information see Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2006

41 See Media Centre, 2005 <http://www.mediacentre.org.yu/code/navigate.asp?Id=662>

42 Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2006

The **Law on Free Access to Information** of Public Importance<sup>43</sup> went into effect in November 2005. The law protects the right of any person to demand information from public authorities, setting conditions and exemptions that are in line with European Union standards. An office of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance<sup>44</sup> was established as an autonomous and independent body to decide on cases of denied access to information. The March 2006 Commissioner's report<sup>45</sup> states that "the willingness of state agencies to allow access to all information on their work ... is still on a low level ... they have done almost nothing or too little to educate their personnel to enable them to implement the law, to produce information booklets, to set up web sites, or to produce annual reports". As a result, only 20 per cent of Serbian citizens are aware of the law<sup>46</sup>.

Marginalized groups are afforded few **opportunities to have their voices heard**. Attention paid by mainstream media to social inclusion issue is sporadic and inadequate. More opportunities are offered by advocacy carried out by international organizations for specific issues, but this is often on an ad-hoc basis, and without media follow-up after the reporting of certain events. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Focal Point of the Government of Serbia, within the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, has launched an initiative to include NGOs in the strategy's monitoring<sup>47</sup>. This is a promising exercise in terms of enhancing the transparency, accountability and responsiveness of developmental interventions.

The process of preparing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper has been evaluated as highly participatory. It was the first attempt at **participatory policymaking** in post-conflict Serbia. It provided legitimacy for similar approaches, and it created demand for more participation, especially among civil society organizations. Even so, there were doubts about the effectiveness of civil society participation and the governmental response to their concerns<sup>48</sup>. In 2005, for example, civil society organizations gained access to the text of the first MDG review report just a few days before the government approved it, without any opportunity to include their point of view. This provoked complaints and emphasized the need to involve civil society organizations in follow-up activities related to the MDGs.

In terms of policymaking at the local level, there is no clear decentralization strategy. There has been a proliferation of initiatives to enhance local-level policies through local development strategies, mostly but not exclusively donor-led<sup>49</sup>. These strategies have been developed with different methodologies; some are more participatory than others, and some are more linked to central-level policymaking than others. There is a need to support participatory policymaking at the local level, and to improve the communication between policies at the central and local levels. In Serbia, however, the Albanian approach does not appear applicable due to this strategy-making fatigue.

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43 OSCE translation of the law is available at <http://www.privacyinternational.org/countries/serbia/serbia-foi-law-2004.pdf>

44 The website of the Commissioner is accessible at [http://www.poverenik.org.yu/default\\_eng.asp](http://www.poverenik.org.yu/default_eng.asp)

45 The report can be accessed at [http://www.poverenik.org.yu/dokumentacija\\_eng.asp?ID=6](http://www.poverenik.org.yu/dokumentacija_eng.asp?ID=6)

46 According to a survey conducted by CeSID (Centar za Oslobodne Izbore I Demokraciju - Centre for Free Elections and Democracy), more information is available at <http://www.cesid.org>

47 For additional information see <http://www.prsp.sr.gov.yu/engleski/aktuelno/kocd.jsp>

48 UNDP Staff in Serbia prepared an Action Reflection Note about civic engagement in the Poverty Reduction Strategy in Serbia

49 A comprehensive mapping of local-level strategies has been prepared by the PRS Implementation Focal Point. It is available at <http://www.prsp.sr.gov.yu/engleski/istrazivanje/index.jsp>

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Serbia and Montenegro<sup>50</sup> does not make any clear reference to communication for development, but a task force of Communication Officers from various UN agencies is trying to coordinate advocacy initiatives on the MDGs and other key country priorities that fall within the United Nations mandate. Additionally, the United Nations Country Team has played a crucial role in advocating for participatory policymaking at the central and local levels.

Having described the communication environment in Serbia, the next section will focus on the role that communication and MDG advocacy can play in the inclusion of socially excluded groups. Specifically, it will provide details about communication challenges and achievement among three groups.

## 3.2 Inclusive communication: refugees, Roma and people with disabilities

### Refugees, IDPs and returnees<sup>51</sup>

Serbia hosts the largest uprooted population in Europe, although numbers have fallen since an estimated 540,000 refugees in 1996. At present, there are 104,246 registered refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and more than 225,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Kosovo. Although refugees and IDPs might face similar situations, their status and challenges related to return are different. Since 2000, relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and with Croatia have been normalized. In April 2007, Ministers responsible for managing issues in the areas of migration, asylum and refugees of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia signed the Sarajevo Declaration<sup>52</sup>, which signified the political intention to settle all unsolved refugee-related issues, while the IDP situation is still linked to the unsolved status of Kosovo. The MDG monitoring framework for Serbia makes an explicit reference to refugees and IDPs in terms of poverty alleviation and job creation<sup>53</sup>.

Although not all displaced people can be considered socially excluded, they confront issues related to their right to return and to dispose of their belongings in the place of origin, as well as difficulties integrating into mainstream society. This can require intensive communication activities to ensure that decisions made by refugees are the result of a well-informed choice between return versus integration.

More recently, a third wave of displaced people has been added to the two categories of refugee and IDP; they are the "returnees", or failed asylum seekers who have been forcibly repatriated from Western European countries following the signature of re-admission agreements<sup>54</sup>. For returnees, information needs will be mostly related to re-integration in Serbia.

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50 Covering Serbia and Montenegro for the period 2005-2009, the document is available at [http://www.undp.org.yu/tareas/reports/reports\\_dl.cfm?ID=72](http://www.undp.org.yu/tareas/reports/reports_dl.cfm?ID=72)

51 The analysis is based on interviews with Danilo Rakic, Policy Officer at the Belgrade-based NGO Group 484 ([http://www.grupa484.org.yu/en\\_index.shtml](http://www.grupa484.org.yu/en_index.shtml)), and Jelena Grujic, a journalist covering displacement issues for the Serbian weekly *Vreme*.

52 More information about the Sarajevo declaration and other refugee-related initiatives are available at the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) <http://www.marri-rc.org/index.php>

53 Goal 1, targets 1 and 2

54 There are no official figures for the number of returnees, but the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs has already received about 24,000 requests from EU countries, and more can be expected.

Since the 1990s, several national and international NGOs have implemented **projects providing information services** to refugees and IDPs, mostly in cooperation with the local Trustee for Refugees offices<sup>55</sup>, which according to NGO activists, is still the most trusted institution among the displaced. These projects have helped codify information needs and identify the most suitable forms for more effective use by the displaced. Major obstacles to access to information now can be removed as a result of coordinated initiatives that simplify time-consuming bureaucratic procedures, supporting travel expenditures to obtain documents or information related to the place of return, or by facilitating language translation for the Roma population or for returnee children who attended school in Western Europe.

The opportunities for public and civil society partnership created by NGO activism in this area also can be used to improve the provision of other public services. In terms of information services, UNDP is supporting the Serbian government in providing information to returnees regarding their rights and entitlements through information points at the airport and focal points at the municipal level, efforts that can help returnees to integrate.

Regarding **public debates** and inclusive communication, the voice of the socially excluded has been largely represented by NGOs that have taken on the role of speaking on behalf of displaced people. National policy debate includes issues of refugee integration as a result of advocacy by NGOs such as Group 484 and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), both organizations with long-standing credibility in terms of their knowledge of displacement. Due to the political sensitivity of the Kosovo status, it has proven more difficult to raise the issue of Kosovo IDPs' integration. Also, the return of failed asylum seekers is a relatively recent issue. Already Group 484 has organized several workshops to steer a public debate among representatives of these groups, state authorities and diplomatic representatives of the countries that are repatriating "returnees", encouraging all parties to discuss the return circumstances and improve integration policies.

Displaced populations in the Serbian territory are widely dispersed, and electronic media might seem to be a logical way to reach them. The interest of mainstream media has faded away, however, following broad coverage of refugee and IDP-related issues in the aftermath of the conflict. Two trends dominate current coverage: First, reporting about displacement issues depends on the prevailing political agenda, which has a potentially negative impact on the post-conflict reconciliation process (e.g., reporting about IDPs is mostly related to security issues in Kosovo). Second, displaced people are portrayed in mass media according to the stereotype of social burden, which hampers their integration despite the fact that many of them are actively contributing to Serbian society.

An example of successful outreach through television is support by UNHCR. Since 2001, the UNHCR office in Serbia has been engaged in addressing the situation by producing two weekly television shows dedicated respectively to refugees and IDPs<sup>56</sup>. The shows aim to provide more objective information to refugees and IDPs to facilitate their free decision on durable solutions

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<sup>55</sup> Local branches of the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees, the national institution in charge of Refugees and IDP issues

<sup>56</sup> Vesna Petkovic, UNHCR Spokesperson in Serbia, has kindly provided all reported information related to the two TV programmes.

to their plight. During the post-Milosevic wave of media liberalization, and in recognition of the relative importance of displacement topics in the public debate, the public Serbian Broadcasting Corporation (Radio Televizija Srbije - RTS) agreed to grant free airtime to broadcast these two television shows.

The shows convey information on a number of topics: an overview of the security situation; legal and procedural issues related to property repossession; programmes providing assistance to returnees; an overview of the prevailing socio-economic situation in areas of potential return, including labour and business opportunities, availability of social services such as health, education and transport; and other topics of relevance to life in displacement. Additionally, legal experts working with the displaced in Serbia regularly identify problems of a general nature or specific cases to be answered by relevant authorities, legal aid centres, NGOs and international organizations. The legal advice may apply to all refugees and IDPs or provide representative examples that benefit others. In addition to three monthly pre-recorded broadcasts, there is one monthly live show with guests including local and government authorities from Croatia and BiH/Bosnia and Herzegovina, plus representatives of NGOs, state institutions, United Nations agencies, and other international organisations. The public can participate during the live broadcast to ask questions and raise issues.

Through these two television programmes, UNHCR provides an innovative approach to communication for socially excluded groups, going beyond advocacy and public relations campaigns and focusing on access to quality information. The shows have been broadcast regularly for six years, adjusting to changed circumstances and proving more effective than ad hoc events that might attract the attention of media for few days, but are easily forgotten afterwards. This is an important lesson learned for UN advocacy efforts.

Communication initiatives are fundamental to efforts to improve the refugee situation in Serbia. Their contribution is about facilitating access to information to a population that because of displacement is marginalized from local informal communication channels. They are raising awareness among policy makers and the majority population about issues affecting uprooted people. Important in the past, communication initiatives will continue to play a central role until all displacement issues are resolved.

**Table 3.1**  
**Communication for Development for Displaced People in Serbia**

Achievements	Challenges	Possible Actions
<b>Communication needs assessments</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A decade of collecting information about possibility to return and entitlements in the place of displacement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No communication needs assessment</li> <li>– Displaced population scattered in the Serbian territory, lack of experience, difficult access to public debates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Communication audit to improve the understanding of displacement issues and the position of displaced people vis-à-vis Serbian society</li> </ul>
<b>Improve access to information</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– NGOs and trustees for refugees as established providers of information services to the displaced</li> <li>– UNHCR television shows improving access to information for displaced thanks to free airtime provided by RTS</li> <li>– UNHCR television shows improving reporting standards about displacement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Focus of access to information for displaced on humanitarian and legal issues, need to improve information on socio-economic issues</li> <li>– Tools to guarantee access to information to returnees are still in embryonic phase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Use best practices from previous phases to enlarge the scope of information provided to all displaced</li> <li>– Additional opportunities to improve access to information for displaced people through mobile phones still unexplored</li> </ul>
<b>Amplify the voice of marginalized groups and ensure response mechanisms</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– NGOs advocacy ensured that refugees and IDP issues were included in PRSP, MDG Monitoring Framework, social housing policies, and other socio-economic policies</li> <li>– UNHCR television show allowing interaction between the public and authorities (displaced people can raise their issues by phone during the live show)</li> <li>– As a result of adopted policies, the phasing out of humanitarian assistance has been matched with efforts for durable solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Inadequate media reporting about displacement (conflict legacy and displaced described as a burden)</li> <li>– Returned asylum seekers just recently appeared in the public debate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Media training to improve media reporting about displacement and amplify the voice of the displaced</li> <li>– Continued cooperation with NGOs and displaced associations to enable them to speak on behalf of their constituencies and monitor policies targeting displacement</li> </ul>
<b>Support to public debates on national policies</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– NGOs and associations of displaced people representing the displaced population in public debates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Need to separate the public debate about living conditions of IDPs from the more politicized debate about Kosovo's status</li> <li>– Need to recognize diversity (of issues and needs) within the displaced population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Diversify policies to improve the situation of displaced populations to take into consideration the needs of the most vulnerable among them (e.g., Roma), also involving them in policymaking</li> </ul>
<b>Incorporate communication for development in UN programmes</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– UNHCR television shows organic to UNHCR programmes in Serbia</li> <li>– UNHCR television shows evaluated through standard audience measurement (average 150,000 to 480,000 viewers, with rating picks of 600,000, beyond the number of displaced in Serbia)<sup>57</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No assessment of communication initiatives in terms of their impact on the living conditions of the displaced population has been carried out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Evaluate UN and NGO communication and information initiatives for displaced populations in terms of their impact on the life of displaced people (e.g., through surveys or continuous monitoring of displaced people's access to information)</li> </ul>

<sup>57</sup> Estimates of Strategic Marketing Media Research/AGB Nielsen Media Research

### **The Roma People<sup>58</sup>**

As in the case of refugees, not all Roma people in Serbia are marginalized. Roma are civil servants in prominent positions at the local and central level, Roma are entrepreneurs, and Roma are employed in international organizations. On the other end of the spectrum, however, Roma people living in slums are experiencing deprivation and social exclusion to extents that are not common among non-Roma. Poverty rates are six times higher among the Roma, compared to non-Roma; unemployment is more than twice as high; educational attainments are significantly lower; and precarious hygienic conditions coupled by inadequate access to health care endanger their health<sup>59</sup>.

Traditionally, divisions within the Roma community<sup>60</sup> have prevented Roma representatives from speaking with one voice. This has hampered opportunities to have their voices heard and to work together to claim rights and entitlements. An additional challenge is that most Roma activists come from an “elite”. Many have completed secondary or tertiary education, and they do not share the harsh socio-economic situation of the majority of Roma. Even so, they have decided not to be simply integrated and they may have been discriminated against despite their achievements. Their ethnic affiliation and determination to be engaged for the emancipation of Roma communities makes them the key advocates for those who are lagging behind.

Stereotypes about Roma, who have only recently been recognised as a “national minority” in Serbia, are prevalent. Roma cultural features have always been looked at differently compared to other minorities whose traditions are included in the Balkan multi-cultural mosaic. On the one hand, Roma music is part of the common cultural heritage, used for weddings and other public occasions, and celebrated in movies and festivals. This is an important vehicle to raise awareness about Roma issues. On the other hand, however, stereotypes describe Roma as inborn miserable people with a tendency to live at the edge of illegality. In this view, the only path to social inclusion would consist in renouncing the Roma identity. A direct consequence of this prevalent attitude is the under-reporting of right violations, and social exclusion in the form of forced evictions, or in cases of non-Roma neighbourhoods opposing the building of social houses for Roma.

Media plays a role in perpetuating stereotypes. Roma activists are convinced that electronic media run by Roma people and addressed to the Roma community could improve the situation<sup>61</sup>. It would also improve the quality of media reporting. Roma media can provide an insider perspective on Roma issues, reach out to the Roma population with information of public interest, and help preserve the Romani language and culture<sup>62</sup>. The potential of Roma media in Serbia is largely untapped because most Roma media lack adequate capacities and usually depend on international donors or the sensitivity of local administrations<sup>63</sup>.

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58 Most of the information presented in this section is derived from interviews with Peter Antic, the coordinator of the Roma NGO Minority Rights Centre, and Dragoljub Ackovic, current Vice-President of the World Roma Parliament, who has been the editor of a Roma Radio and TV station in Belgrade.

59 For information about the socio-economic situation of Roma people in Serbia see UNDP, Serbia 2006, and <http://www.romadecade.org/index.php?content=6>

60 In Former Yugoslavia, those who for the purpose of this paper are defined Roma identify themselves as at least three groups (Roma, Ashkalijia and Egyptian) characterised by linguistic and cultural differences, but sharing the same socio-economic situation described above.

61 OSCE Mission to Serbia <http://www.osce.org/serbia/> has financed projects on Roma media, and the issue of Roma media was at the centre of the author's conversation with Mr. Ackovic.

62 The Romani language has not yet been codified into one shared idiom and it is not taught in schools. The language risks being lost, also due to efforts to integrate Roma children in mainstream education.

63 Currently, Radio Novi Sad and Radio Beograd (the latter with national coverage) broadcast news in Romani, while a private Roma Radio and TV station in Belgrade, has been closed in April 2006

According to Roma activists interviewed for this paper, initiatives to improve access to information by Roma communities should focus on improving capacities and opportunities for Roma people to use available information. Within Roma communities, copying mechanisms based on informal solidarity help spread relevant information. Illiterate Roma, for example, can find a member of the community with enough skills to interpret essential information. Raising Roma people's awareness about their rights and entitlements is not enough: without effective mechanisms to enforce these rights, information may cause disillusion. Roma would answer to campaigns for children immunizations, but in Serbia people without legal documents do not have access to the national health system. Health information campaigns are of no use to a considerable part of Roma population unless provisions are made to include people without documents in the public health system, or to provide documents to those who are living in illegal settlements. Access to information initiatives must go beyond the provision of information about national laws and regulations. It is necessary to improve the capacity of the Roma to access information, and to improve public institutions' understanding of and readiness to respond to their information needs.

The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 is a political commitment by governments in Central and South-Eastern Europe to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma within a regional framework<sup>64</sup>. The Decade focuses on the priority areas of education, employment, health and housing, and commits governments to take into account the other core issues of poverty, discrimination and gender mainstreaming. Clearly inspired by the MDGs, the Prime Ministers of the participating governments<sup>65</sup> signed the "Declaration of the Decade of Roma Inclusion" in Sofia on 2 February 2005, committing themselves to establishing policies and action plans to achieve major progress by 2015.

Thus far, the Decade of Roma Inclusion has not produced consistent and well-thought policies or adequate budget allocations for their implementation. However, it has raised attention and guided discussion about socio-economic difficulties and about the correct approach to addressing these challenges: through inclusion instead of assimilation. The Decade's motto is "Nothing about us without us". This motto has helped involve Roma NGOs in policymaking exercises such as the drafting of national Decade Action Plans for the implementation of the Roma decade, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and the MDG Monitoring Framework. The increased demand for participation has strengthened the capacity of Roma NGOs to take part in high-level policy dialogue and to overcome their internal disagreements. Sixty Serbian Roma and non-Roma organizations established the League for the Decade of Roma Inclusion<sup>66</sup> to support the Decade and monitor the implementation of its action plans in Serbia at the local and national level. On 19 September 2007, the presentation of the League's Decade Watch monitoring report for Serbia to the Serbian Parliament was also the occasion for the Government to announce an amendment to the budget law that, for the first time, allocates state funds for the Decade's actions plans. Additional improvements are expected in July 2008, when the Government of Serbia will take over the presidency of the Decade.

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64 Additional information regarding the Decade of Roma Inclusion is available at [www.romadecade.org](http://www.romadecade.org)

65 The signatory countries of the Roma Decade are Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia

66 More information on the League for the Decade of Roma Inclusion can be found at [http://www.romadecade.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=167&Itemid=85](http://www.romadecade.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=167&Itemid=85)

<b>Table 3.2 Communication for Development for Roma People in Serbia</b>		
<b>Achievements</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Possible Actions</b>
<b>Communication needs assessments</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No accurate analysis of information needs, major communication means and sources for Roma communities</li> <li>– Critical role of mainstream media in perpetuating stereotypes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Perform information and communication audits within Roma communities, with a focus on slums and the most marginalized Roma populations</li> </ul>
<b>Improve access to information</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Informal communication and solidarity mechanisms within Roma communities are still an effective way to share and access information</li> <li>– UNDP project supporting Roma focal points in pilot municipalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Low levels of education (need to improve functional literacy)</li> <li>– Discriminatory practices</li> <li>– Information to Roma communities should reflect the actual status of policies' implementation, since Roma are already aware about rights they cannot exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Invest in Roma literacy, including informal education based on current structures within Roma communities</li> <li>– Remove obstacles that impede Roma people to use information to improve their lives (e.g., lack of documents)</li> <li>– Strengthen the capacity of Roma to use legal instruments to fight discrimination</li> </ul>
<b>Amplify the voice of marginalized groups and ensure response mechanisms</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Roma NGOs using ICT tools for national and international networking and advocacy (e.g. Minority Rights Centre <a href="http://www.mrc.org.yu">www.mrc.org.yu</a> and the Roma virtual network of the European Roma Information Office <a href="http://www.erionet.org">www.erionet.org</a>)</li> <li>– National Council of Roma as the institutional mechanism to represent Roma people</li> <li>– Two Roma MPs and other Roma officials elected at the local level representing Roma constituencies within public institutions</li> <li>– Serbian presidency of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in 2008, and first allocation of funds to its implementation in Serbia in 2008 budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fragmentation within the Roma community</li> <li>– Potential of Roma media largely untapped</li> <li>– Divide between the Roma elite (including Roma NGO activists and MPs) and the most marginalized among Roma</li> <li>– Need to strengthen institutional commitments to the implementation of the Roma Decade Action Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Support networks and coalitions of Roma CSOs, and dialogue among them, to strengthen their advocacy potentials</li> <li>– Invest in Roma-owned media</li> <li>– Develop the capacity of mainstream media to cover Roma-related issues</li> <li>– Based on the Decade of Roma Inclusion, build accountability and responsiveness of policies targeting the Roma population, through monitoring mechanisms that involve Roma communities</li> <li>– Use UN advocacy events to give the opportunity to Roma representatives to have their voice heard</li> </ul>
<b>Support to public debates on national policies</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Decade of Roma Inclusion as the main forum to include Roma people in debates on national policies, with a focus on specific policies to address Roma issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Need to ensure that policies aimed at improving living conditions in Roma settlements are based on dialogue with their inhabitants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Use donor-funded interventions to foster dialogue between Roma communities (and their representatives) and national and local institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Incorporate communication for development in UN programmes</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– CCA and UNDAF refer to the need to include Roma in development interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Need to improve coordination among advocacy activities for Roma issues</li> <li>– Additional efforts are needed to integrate Roma in area-based development projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Joint UN and Roma NGOs advocacy linked to the Decade of Roma Inclusion</li> <li>– Invest in evaluating the impact of UN advocacy on Roma communities</li> </ul>

Communication initiatives enable the Roma population to voice needs and concerns, access rights and escape social exclusion. Communication initiatives also sensitize non-Romani populations and help them overcome stereotypes. Table 3.2 is summarising the achievements, challenges and possible actions in communication for development and its relevance to Roma people in Serbia.

#### **People living with disabilities<sup>67</sup>**

An estimated 800,000 people are living with various types of disabilities in Serbia, or about 10 percent of the population, although accurate statistics are not available. For most of these people, disability means exclusion and the inability to exercise their rights as citizens.

Direct and indirect discrimination, and physical, logistical and systemic barriers are preventing people with disabilities from attaining educational levels according to their real capacities, and from accessing employment. Exclusion from the labour market is also one of the main causes of poverty among people with disabilities. Discrimination and lack of understanding of their needs and abilities forces people with disabilities to live confined within the walls of their homes or to be unnecessarily institutionalized, determining invisibility and exclusion. This invisibility is also a crucial aspect of their political marginalization, with little political clout despite their sizable numbers. Being relatively invisible to their fellow citizens and to the government, their rights are easy to ignore<sup>68</sup>.

#### **Box 4 » UNSG on people with disabilities**

*People with disabilities are a natural and integral part of society and, in the interest of society as a whole, should have opportunities to contribute their experience, talents and capabilities to national and international development.*

From the Report of the UN Secretary General to the 49th General Assembly

People living with disabilities need access to the same kind of information used by other citizens to function in society. Often this access is denied not by their capabilities, but by discriminatory barriers that can be easily removed. Such barriers exist in the attitudes and prejudices of society and in the policies and practices of governments, media, social services institutions and information systems – all of which were established without taking into consideration the needs of people with physical and mental impairments. The very same barriers preclude or discourage people with disabilities from participating in public life.

Media can help remove attitudinal barriers that prevent people with disabilities from being seen as people with talent, creativity and a potential to contribute to society. There is a role for mass media as well as for institutional or informal media, such as those created at school or in the working place. Too often, approaches to people living with disabilities range from total neglect to charity, and they are usually represented as a financial burden for social services. Most common

<sup>67</sup> Most of the considerations contained in this section have been inspired by interviews with Vesna Bogdanovic (a representative of the NGO CRID – Centar za razvoj inkluzivnog društva, Inclusive Society Development Centre) and Ivanka Jovanovic, a representative of the Association of People with Dystrophies, kindly provided by Daniel Varga, Programme Associate at the Policy Unit in UNDP Belgrade Office, and by the draft prepared by Ciprus, Clark and Ivanov in August 2007

<sup>68</sup> See Ciprus, Clark and Ivanov, August 2007

is the “medical approach”, which treats disability as a medical problem to be solved by the health system, and which does not acknowledge societal barriers that could be removed. These attitudes, and the fact that people with disabilities are rarely invited to express their opinions, are not conducive to changing stereotypes.

To ensure access to information to people with disabilities, it is necessary to go beyond the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance mentioned in section 3.1. Specific anti-discrimination laws and mechanisms are required to enforce equal rights and opportunities, taking into account disability-related impediments. Information systems should enable provision of information and reception of feedback from all citizens in spite of disabilities. This approach is in contrast to focusing on what people with disabilities can do to overcome their difficulties in accessing information. This approach would be conducive to inclusive society, instead of inserting people with disabilities into existing structures.

The direct participation of people living with disabilities in policymaking process (as it happened with the preparation of the PRSP and the MDG Monitoring Framework) is crucial to improving policy makers’ understanding of their situation and their potential to contribute to societal development. Removing existing barriers to access to information for people with disabilities is a prerequisite for effective participation in public debates. Civil society activists are calling for sign language translation of at least a synthesis of the parliamentary debates broadcast by RTS, to enable deaf people to follow national policy debates. Similar schemes can be replicated to ensure that people with disabilities are involved in policymaking at the local level, since social change at the community level is often more difficult than changing national regulations.

Most institutions are designed without the participation of people with disabilities, and therefore they do not take into consideration their needs and potentials. This explains why organizations of people with disabilities have for many years used the motto mentioned before in the context of the Decade of Roma Inclusion: “Nothing about us without us”.

Despite the lack of political power on the part of people with disabilities, civil society organizations in Serbia are active, articulate and effective advocates on their behalf. Support to these civil society organizations, as well as direct provision of information to persons with disabilities can increase their participation in the political sphere. Improved policies can then improve access to education and employment. National, regional and global cooperation among these organizations has the potential to amplify the voice of people living with disabilities, as it did with the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the United Nations General Assembly.

Stronger response mechanisms are needed in Serbian institutions that have the duty to enforce anti-discriminatory regulations (e.g., the judiciary, the office of the ombudsperson, equality and affirmative measures bodies). Civil society organizations advocate for action in protecting the rights and entitlements of people with disabilities. Their aim is not merely to be the focus of policy makers’ attentions only on ad hoc occasions such as electoral campaigns.

To include people with disabilities in society, first it is necessary to remove the societal barriers that are keeping them out, and second to provide adequate support to enable them to function effectively at work, school and in community life. Communication for development can play a key role in fighting discrimination against and exclusion of people with disabilities, empowering them to raise their concerns and to overcome invisibility, which is one of the main causes of exclusion. A few examples of communication initiatives that could improve the social inclusion of people with disabilities are illustrated in table 3.3.

<b>Table 3.3 Communication for Development for People with Disabilities in Serbia</b>		
<b>Achievements</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Possible Actions</b>
<b>Communication needs assessments</b>		
	– No accurate information about communication needs and available instruments for people with disabilities	– Need to undertake a communication and information audit on disability issues
<b>Improve access to information</b>		
– One private television station, B92, adopted sign language translators during part of its news editions ( <a href="http://www.b92.net">www.b92.net</a> )	– Prejudice and physical barriers denying people with disabilities to access information – Public media broadcasting lagging behind (e.g., no sign language for parliamentary sessions broadcasting)	– Apply more consistently existing formats and new ICT potentials to facilitate access to information to people with disabilities (e.g., Braille print, audio materials, sign language, easy-to-read formats) – Need to remove physical barriers reducing freedom of movement to facilitate access to public institutions
<b>Amplify the voice of marginalized groups and ensure response mechanisms</b>		
– National, regional and global cooperation among CSOs dealing with disabilities to improve information exchange and advocacy effectiveness (e.g., Disability Monitor Initiative for South East Europe <sup>71</sup> ) – An MP with disabilities has facilitated access to high level policy-making	– Media portray people with disabilities through a medical approach, often in pathetic terms, and they are rarely offered opportunities to express their views – As of October 2007, Serbia had not ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities <sup>72</sup>	– Need to stimulate public debates about disabilities, raise media interest and awareness, as well as solidarity in school and working places
<b>Support to public debates on national policies</b>		
– CSOs representing people with disabilities participated in the preparation of PRSP, MDG Monitoring Framework and specific policies related to people with disabilities – Law to fight discrimination against people with disabilities adopted in January 2007 <sup>73</sup>	– Prejudice and physical barriers denying people with disabilities access to public debate – CSOs dealing with disabilities mostly present in biggest towns, difficult to ensure participation in smaller communities	– Keep supporting CSOs dealing with disabilities in their advocacy and participatory efforts
<b>Incorporate communication for development in UN programmes</b>		
– UN Country Team engaged in advocacy for people with disabilities and in improving the policy framework	– Physical barriers are still denying access to UN buildings to people with disabilities and their access to UN documents	– Improve accessibility to UN events and documents for people with disabilities – Improve evaluation tools for disability-related initiatives (e.g., surveys among people with disabilities)

71 More information on the Disability Monitoring Initiative is available at [www.disabilitymonitor-see.org](http://www.disabilitymonitor-see.org)

72 More information on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is available at [www.un.org/disabilities/convention](http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention)

73 More information on the relevant legal framework in Serbia is available at [http://www.disabilitymonitor-see.org/legis\\_serma.htm](http://www.disabilitymonitor-see.org/legis_serma.htm)

### 3.3 Recommendations: Communicating the MDGs in Serbia

The preparation of the MDG Monitoring Framework for Serbia has demonstrated the importance of disaggregating socio-economic data and information along the lines of gender, ethnicity, geography and disability, among others, to better understand where development challenges lie and how to address them. Recognizing the information gap is only the first step towards improving data collection and evidence-based policymaking. The communication for development paradigm highlights that communication is a two-way process and, going beyond statistics, socially excluded people have a say in both defining their situation and identifying how to improve it.

This section has analysed how communication plays a fundamental role in including marginalized groups in the policy debate as protagonists and not only as objects of the debate. Some initiatives are already taking place; other opportunities can be created or improved. Promoting the MDGs in Serbia should be seen as an opportunity to advocate for inclusive approaches, focusing on those who are socially excluded and who have already been identified as the focus of United Nations interventions and of the main socio-economic policies in Serbia.

#### Box 5 » Youth and the MDGs in Serbia

*The MDG Monitoring Framework for Serbia refers to youth, with an emphasis on health and education issues (MDGs 2, 5 and 6). The decision of the Government to prepare a Youth Strategy through a broad consultative process was the occasion to introduce an audience of youth civil society organizations to the MDGs, explaining their potential for demanding more transparency and accountability. The discussion was sufficient for youth organizations to understand that the MDGs were about issues with a high relevance for their everyday life, and that they could be instrumental for advocacy activities. Some of the main recommendations coming from this audience related to the need to enhance participatory processes, to improve information collection and sharing, and to translate the MDG monitoring framework in a user-friendly language, to make it more understandable to the general public.*

It is important to understand what vulnerable groups need to know about the MDGs and what are the best means to communicate this knowledge. Data and analysis should be translated into a user-friendly language so that it is accessible to all citizens, and also take into consideration the specific needs of excluded groups (e.g., formats for people with impaired sight or hearing, translation in minority languages). Breaking the barrier of the bureaucratic and specialist jargon used by policy makers, and also by international organizations, will enable everybody to take part in the policy debate. Educating the population about statistics can improve their understanding about policymaking and its relevance for their everyday life, including what statistics can and cannot impart, when they can be considered more or less reliable, and how to complement them with other kinds of information. The MDG workshop for youth civil society organizations, described in box 5, revealed how close the MDGs can be to the real life of people, when the focus is on their content and not on international declarations.

Mass media can be a key ally in promoting the MDGs to empower people. Although this paper has pointed out a number of existing weaknesses with regard to the quality of media content in Serbia, considerable improvement has been registered in both public and private broadcasting since Milosevic's time. Activists from civil society organizations representing people with disabilities have noticed improvements in the terminology used while talking about people with disabilities, which is not enough but can represent a positive trend. Additionally, Serbia has an extended network of local television and radio stations and newspapers that can support efforts to mobilize local communities. United Nations agencies can be more proactive in developing media capacities to present development issues, and they can allocate more space to vulnerable groups. This goes beyond reporting in a professionally sound manner by allowing vulnerable groups to directly express their views and by supporting concerted efforts to overcome deeply rooted prejudices. Building on the lessons learned from UNHCR television programmes about refugees and IDPs, it is possible to use the MDGs to provide examples of better journalism.

Information and Communication Technologies offer new opportunities to improve access to information and involve people in public debates. Computers and Internet access are available only to a minority of the Serbian population, and usually not available to the most vulnerable and marginalized. However, the Serbian government has committed to a knowledge economy and it is part of the Electronic South East Europe Initiative<sup>74</sup>, which advocates for additional investment in this sector and action to close the existing digital gap within the country. The Internet is a powerful instrument in the hands of civil society organizations, as proven by the networking efforts to support the implementation of the Decade for Roma Inclusion. The new MDG monitoring online resource<sup>75</sup> launched in November 2007 is an example of how ICT can be used to track progress towards the MDGs and an information tool that could be replicated at the country level.

Mobile phones, which are already owned by most Serbian citizens including a vast majority of vulnerable people, could be better exploited for development purposes such as improving access to information and fostering networking and social mobilization around specific developmental issues. Potential public-private partnership with the two or three operators present in Serbia could also be envisaged.

Using the available communication technology, the MDGs should be promoted to improve quality and quantity of information, which would usually circulate only among bureaucrats) and to create demand for additional information. Involving NGOs and representatives of vulnerable groups in MGD monitoring can enhance their capacity to participate in the policy debate and raise awareness about the right to receive information from state authorities and to receive it in formats that makes it accessible to all citizens, including those who have been traditionally excluded from mainstream society. Participatory MDG reporting can establish the praxis of regular public presentations of development statistics under the scrutiny of civil society organizations and media. This will create demand for improved data collection and

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<sup>74</sup> More information about the eSEE initiative is available at <http://www.stabilitypact.org/e-see/>

<sup>75</sup> More information about the MDG Monitor is available at <http://www.mdgmonitor.org>

analysis about vulnerable groups, and for sharing information about budget allocations and the impact of socio-economic policies. Parliamentary public hearings are a vehicle for public dialogue that has been explored by UNDP, as described in box 6.

Participatory and inclusive processes took place during the preparation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the MDG Monitoring Framework. They generated demand for more participation in drafting the youth strategy, policies for people with disabilities, and National Action Plans to implement the Decade of Roma Inclusion. All of these experiences can be crucial for the preparation of the Joint Inclusion Memorandum that will be due as Serbia prepares to join the European Union<sup>76</sup>. These processes should become a consuetude in Serbian policy-making if there is a genuine demand for participation and if the supply side is prepared to accept its value added along with the additional responsibilities of transparency and accountability.

The real challenge is how to ensure adequate participation without making these processes too lengthy to be effective. This requires delegation, and a transparent selection of the representatives of the various groups that are invited to take part in the process. Support to civil society organizations must endeavour to strengthen the links between NGOs and vulnerable groups, overcoming past diffidence and improving the direct participation of vulnerable people in these organizations. Moreover, participation should be extended to the entire policy cycle, including policy implementation and monitoring beyond the phase of policy design. Participation will be more effective and less time-consuming if consultation becomes routine, and contacts between state institutions and civil society are regular as opposed to ad hoc events. Also, participatory policymaking at the local level can contribute to faster and more effective identification of methodologies, which can restrict the number of stakeholders and the scope of the discussion. More efforts are necessary to ensure that public dialogue initiatives at the local level are coordinated among stakeholders and with institutions at the central level.

MDG campaigns have the potential to attract the interest of donors, government representatives and media at specific moments or events, such as the UN Day or the presentation of a report by the Secretary General. Based on the approach elaborated in this paper, it is possible to capitalize on these moments to illustrate what the MDGs are really about: addressing everyday problems of the most vulnerable part of the population to the benefit of whole society. Also, these events are crucial opportunities to give the floor to representatives of vulnerable groups, enabling them to speak alongside the high-level representatives of governments and international organizations, when they have the opportunity to attract most media attention.

When United Nations agencies promote the MDGs through communication for development tools, their MDG campaigns cannot be conceived as a separate intervention. Communication initiatives must accompany the regular programming cycle. Expressing each project through the MDG framework can provide consistency and transparency to these initiatives, improving the way vulnerable groups understand them and participate in them.

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<sup>76</sup> More information on the Joint Inclusion Memoranda (JIM) are available at [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/social\\_inclusion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/index_en.htm)

Finally, monitoring and evaluation must assess the impact of communication initiatives. Surveys and focus groups interviews can add to understanding about what vulnerable people need from the development discourse, and how information can help them improve their situation. It is necessary to monitor participatory policy-making, including occasions for public dialogue, and to track the impact of communication initiatives on the realisation of human rights and the enhancement of dialogue within societies. Only by analysing which communication tools can make a difference in different circumstances will it be possible to ensure that resources invested in communication are meaningful to development.

The table in Annex 2 explains how communication initiatives can contribute to achieving all of the MDG targets as defined in the MDG Monitoring Framework for Serbia. This table highlights the contribution of communication and does not intend to suggest that communication alone is sufficient to achieve the MDGs. The list of proposed initiatives in the table is not intended to be comprehensive or detailed, and the author is aware that additional efforts and specialized communication skills are necessary to translate the communication for development approach into an action plan to promote the MDGs in Serbia.

## Conclusions

This paper looked at the MDGs as a communication tool instead of an object of communication. The MDGs have the potential to make development more understandable to the people at the centre of development policies: the poor, vulnerable and socially excluded. Action to improve the capability of these people to use information about development to claim their rights and to hold authorities accountable vis-à-vis their commitments has the potential to make development interventions more effective and ultimately to contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The Albanian experience has shown that MDGs can be a good ground to mobilize participation around the preparation of national and local development strategies. In Serbia, a preliminary analysis was enough to reveal the benefits that vulnerable groups could obtain from enhanced communication.

The fundamental questions are: What do people need to know about the MDGs? How can poor and socially excluded people be brought into the policy dialogue? Who is entitled to voice the needs and concerns of various vulnerable groups? The answers can be different according to the country context and the issue, but they must be found before engaging in MDG advocacy activities.

Mass media and ICT can be powerful allies to convey development messages and raise awareness about the need for action, but almost everywhere the quality of reporting about socio-economic issues needs to be improved. The United Nations can contribute to the improvement of the media environment by simplifying the way it talks about development. It can, for instance, eliminate the jargon from public speeches and use its leverage to bring the poor in front of the media, and provide support to empower the poor and marginalized to use ICT to make their voices heard and to spread their opinions. Famous testimonials can play an important role in attracting the attention of the media and the public, but allowing the poor and marginalized to speak in public about their situation can have a greater impact in terms of understanding development challenges.

MDGs can be used to promote access to development information, which people need if they are to join in the policy dialogue. The first step is to identify and remove barriers that prevent access to information. These may be direct barriers such as the state institutions making it impossible to obtain information, or they may be indirect barriers hidden in discrimination and inappropriate language or format. Language and knowledge barriers between the development language and the language in which poor people express the problems they face in everyday life must be broken. For example, if the problem of a farmer is her/his inability to sell this year's crop and the problem of the Minister of Economy is the trade balance, it is important to understand and be ready to explain that ultimately they are talking about the same thing.

Access to information is not sufficient if people do not have the capacity to use it for their own benefit and to influence the policy discourse. Institutionalizing dialogue all through the policy cycle can be an important exercise in capacity building. The MDGs are meant to trigger action. There are many steps between raising awareness about the need to change developmental policies, to achieving the goal of poverty reduction. Such steps include the preparation of local level strategies, obtaining funding for initiatives, monitoring the implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategies, and much more. All of these initiatives can present opportunities to include vulnerable groups and to empower them to become part of the decision-making process.

# Annex 1

## The MDG Monitoring Framework and the Role of Communication

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)		
GOALS AND TARGETS (from the Millennium Declaration)	Indicators for monitoring progress	Potential communication support
<b>Goal 1 » Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</b>		
<b>Target 1</b> Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day</li> <li>2. Poverty gap ratio [incidence x depth of poverty]</li> <li>3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ensure transparency and accountability of pro-poor policies and programmes</li> <li>– Promote public debate on the development, implementation and monitoring of pro-poor policies</li> </ul>
<b>Target 2</b> Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age</li> <li>5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Guarantee the rights of excluded people to take part in decision-making by governments and donor countries</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2 » Achieve universal primary education</b>		
<b>Target 3</b> Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education</li> <li>7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5</li> <li>8. Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ensure spaces for public debate on community issues to identify how educational programmes can address these issues</li> <li>– Assess the real obstacles marginalized people are facing in accessing information about education programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 3 » Promote gender equality and empower women</b>		
<b>Target 4</b> Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education</li> <li>10. Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old</li> <li>11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector</li> <li>12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Support dialogue at the community level to foster changes in social attitudes and practices to address gender inequalities</li> <li>– Reinforce women's space, presence and voice in public arenas</li> <li>– Collect and disseminate gender disaggregated data and information to create consensus on gender equality policies</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 4 » Reduce child mortality</b>		
<b>Target 5</b> Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Under-five mortality rate</li> <li>14. Infant mortality rate</li> <li>15. Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Strengthen the capacity of marginalized people to demand and access information about children's vaccination, malaria prevention, access to clean water, health services and better nutrition and additional means to reduce infant mortality</li> </ul>

GOALS AND TARGETS (from the Millennium Declaration)	Indicators for monitoring progress	Potential communication support
<b>Goal 5 » Improve maternal health</b>		
<b>Target 6</b> Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	16. Maternal mortality ratio 17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	– Promote information and debate about reproductive health to empower women to make informed choices about maternity and delivery
<b>Goal 6 » Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</b>		
<b>Target 7</b> Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	18. HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years 19. Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate 19a. Condom use at last high-risk sex 19b. Percentage of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS 19c. Contraceptive prevalence rate 20. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years	– Promote communicative interaction, dialogue and debate about the HIV/AIDS pandemic to enhance people's and communities' relation to and understanding of the pandemic, as the best way for citizens to adopt preventive behaviours – Empower people living with HIV/AIDS to speak in public debates to sensitize the population about the need to strengthen preventive measures, to advocate for free retrovirus drugs and to eradicate stigma against those who are affected
<b>Target 8</b> Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	21. Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria 22. Proportion of population in malaria-risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures 23. Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis 24. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course DOTS (Internationally recommended TB control strategy)	– Two-way flow of communication (authority informing about accessibility and communities providing feedback about real obstacles to access) about means to prevent infections to improve the diffusion of and demand for prevention – Promote debates in mass media and in local communities about the most common and addressable causes of the spread of certain diseases to promote awareness and change behaviours
<b>Goal 7 » Ensure environmental sustainability</b>		
<b>Target 9</b> Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources	25. Proportion of land area covered by forest 26. Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area 27. Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP) 28. Carbon dioxide emissions per capita and consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs (ODP tons) 29. Proportion of population using solid fuels	– Promote information and public debate about climate change and other environmental issues to sensitize the population and create consensus about the need for environmentally-sound behaviours and policies – Promote participatory decision-making at the community level about all projects with a potential impact on the environment (e.g., big infrastructure projects, land conversion)

<b>GOALS AND TARGETS (from the Millennium Declaration)</b>	<b>Indicators for monitoring progress</b>	<b>Potential communication support</b>
<b>Target 10</b> Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	30. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural  31. Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural	– Promote public debates about the effective use of water resources at the central and local level
<b>Target 11</b> By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers	32. Proportion of households with access to secure tenure	– Promote dialogue with slum dwellers to identify the most appropriate interventions to improve their living standards without jeopardizing their coping strategies

## Annex 2

### Communication Initiatives Related to the Serbian MDG Agenda

Serbia – Millennium Development Goals, National Targets and Indicators		
Goals/targets	Indicator	Communication for empowerment
MDG 1 » Halve poverty rate and eradicate hunger		
<b>Target 1</b> By 2015, reduce the unemployment rate of the economically active population by at least 50%	Total unemployment rate Unemployment rate – women Unemployment rate – men Unemployment rate – youth Unemployment rate – persons with disability Unemployment rate – Roma Unemployment rate – refugees and IDPs	– Engage in a dialogue including employers associations, trade unions and other CSOs about economic reforms (privatization, liberalization, reform of the labour market, etc.) to prevent social disorder and minimize the impact of transition and reforms on society
<b>Target 2</b> By 2015, halve the total population poverty rate	Poverty rate – total population Poverty rate – urban areas Poverty rate – rural areas Poverty rate – Roma Poverty rate – refugees and IDPs	– Include the poor and marginalized groups at the central and local level in developing policies, to improve the understanding of the cycle of poverty and create consensus about propose interventions.
<b>Target 3</b> By 2015 halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	– Proportion of unemployed in the total number of family support allowance beneficiaries – Proportion of those unable to work within the total number of family support allowance beneficiaries – Share of food expenditures within total household budget – Children under 5 who fall below minus two standard deviations from the median weight for height – Under-five children who are obese	– Involve the beneficiaries of social assistance in the design of case-by-case programmes to enhance their active role in addressing their needs and improve the targeting of social assistance

Goals/targets	Indicator	Communication for empowerment
<b>MDG 2 » By 2015, ensure universal primary education</b>		
<b>Target 1</b> Increase the coverage of children with primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Proportion of children who enrol in PS (boys/girls, rural/urban, Roma, children with special needs)</li> <li>– Improve the dialogue with vulnerable households where children do not attend primary school to identify comprehensive solutions to their conditions that will enable them to send children to school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Promote public dialogue about the importance of primary education, with a focus on vulnerable communities, such as Roma or remote rural areas</li> </ul>
<b>Target 2</b> Acquiring professions, promotion of the life-long learning concept and access to higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Proportion of children who graduate from regular secondary school (SS) (boys/girls, rural/urban, Roma, children with special needs)</li> <li>– Coverage of children by SS (from 1st to 4th grade of SS – age 15-18) (boys/girls, rural/urban, Roma, children with special needs)</li> <li>– Net secondary school enrolment rate</li> <li>– Enrolment in the 1st grade of SS right after the completion of PS (boys/girls, rural/urban, Roma, children with special needs)</li> <li>– Proportion of total pupils in 4-year secondary education (boys/girls, rural/urban, Roma, children with special needs)</li> <li>– Proportion of pupils in gymnasiums</li> <li>– Proportion of pupils in 4-year VET schools</li> <li>– Proportion of total pupils in 3-year secondary education</li> <li>– 3-year secondary education graduation rate</li> <li>– 4-year secondary education graduation rate</li> <li>– Proportion of Roma children who complete some form of secondary education (3/4-year)</li> <li>– Proportion of children with special needs who complete some form of secondary education (3/4-year)</li> <li>– Proportion of part-time secondary school pupils</li> <li>– Proportion of youth who go to tertiary education right after the completion of secondary school (3/4-year)</li> <li>– Proportion of literacy among youth between 15 and 24 years of age (boys/girls, rural/urban, Roma, children with special needs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Promote public dialogue on state-sponsored initiatives to promote knowledge economy and information society, to enable citizens to make the best use of new opportunities</li> <li>– Involve youth (including youth from socially excluded groups) in school-related activities to enhance their active contribution to the education system and to make education institutions more attractive to the youth population</li> <li>– Introduce civic education and debates about socio-economic issues in secondary school, with a focus on activities aimed at the inclusion of marginalized groups such as Roma youth and youth with disabilities, to promote intra-generational solidarity</li> </ul>
<b>Target 3</b> Improve the quality of primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Data on the results of the assessment of primary school 3rd and 4th grade pupils in the Republic of Serbia – mathematics and Serbian language</li> <li>– Examination of primary school pupil's performance in mathematics (TIMSS)</li> <li>– Examination of primary school pupil's performance in science (TIMSS)</li> <li>– Program for International Student Assessment – mathematics (PISA 03)</li> <li>– Program for International Student Assessment – science (PISA 03)</li> <li>– Program for International Student Assessment – reading (PISA 03)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Involve teacher and school personnel in debates about quality of education and reform of the school system to build consensus and enhance their commitment to high quality inclusive education</li> <li>– Introduce ICT into primary schools to expand the range of educational opportunities</li> </ul>

Goals/targets	Indicator	Communication for empowerment
<b>MDG 3 » Promote gender equality and empower women</b>		
<b>Target 1</b> By 2015, halve the economic inequalities between men and women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Proportion of women among the poor</li> <li>– Proportion of women employed in non-agricultural activities</li> <li>– Proportion of women among the unemployed</li> <li>– Proportion of children covered by preschool education</li> <li>– Proportion of women in trade unions</li> <li>– Proportion of women in decision-making positions in trade unions</li> <li>– Wage gap between men and women</li> <li>– Proportion of women among entrepreneurs</li> <li>– Number of newly employed Roma women (annual average)</li> <li>– Number of newly employed women with disability (annual average)</li> <li>– Eradication of gender discrimination in employment - analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Promote public debates, supported by statistical evidence, about the position of women in the labour market, to counter the widespread assumption that in Serbia there are no gender inequalities in employment</li> <li>– Promote dialogue about the role of women in the labour market, with a focus on rural communities, Roma population and other socially excluded communities where the proportion of working women is lower compared to national averages</li> </ul>
<b>Target 2</b> By 2015, increase the proportion of women in political decision-making positions to at least 30 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Proportion of women among National Assembly MPs</li> <li>– Proportion of women among ambassadors</li> <li>– Proportion of women among high government officials</li> <li>– Proportion of women among high local government officials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Engage prominent politicians (women and men) in campaigns (also during electoral campaigns) to promote the importance of gender equality in state institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Target 3</b> By 2008, complete the creation of systemic foundations for achieving gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Adoption of a plan for the implementation of the Gender Equality Law</li> <li>– Adoption of a plan for NAP implementation</li> <li>– Number of employed in gender equality mechanisms and number of gender focal points</li> <li>– Drafting a gender sensitive budget analysis</li> <li>– Drafting a gender sensitive strategy for population development</li> <li>– Drafting a gender sensitive tax policy</li> <li>– Number of employees in public administration, included in gender policy trainings and seminars, including gender budgeting</li> <li>– Preparation of CEDAW Report and establishment of adequate monitoring system</li> <li>– Drafting a strategy to improve the position of women in rural areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Extensive policy dialogue, with the inclusion of women NGOs, to establish gender equality mechanisms that can respond to need and expectations to promote gender equality</li> </ul>
<b>Target 4</b> By 2015, develop the system of protection for female victims of violence and the system of prevention of violence against women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Number of counselling services for female victims of violence</li> <li>– Number of safe houses for women</li> <li>– Number of officials included in the training on violence against women</li> <li>– Number of criminal reports and court proceedings against those who committed violence against women</li> <li>– Protection measures pertaining to Family Law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Extensive civic dialogue (through mass media and at the community level) to change the common perception that gender and family violence is a personal and not a societal problem, and that it can be acceptable to a certain extent</li> </ul>

Goals/targets	Indicator	Communication for empowerment
<b>MDG 4 » Reduce child mortality</b>		
<b>Target 1</b> Between 2000 and 2015, reduce on average by half the under-five mortality rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Under-five mortality rate (on 1000 live births)</li> <li>– Infant mortality rate (on 1000 live births)</li> <li>– Prenatal mortality rate (on 1000 live births)</li> <li>– Neonatal mortality rate (on 1000 live births)</li> <li>– Under-five mortality rate (on 1000 live births) – Roma</li> <li>– Infant mortality rate (on 1000 live births) – Roma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Promote participatory discussions among the general population (with the active involvement of health workers, and with a focus on health institutions in rural areas and smaller towns) about basic precautions related to post-birth care</li> <li>– Promote interactive exchanges of experience within Roma settlements about children vaccination and how to access and demand it</li> <li>– Public campaigns (in mass media, but also promoting dialogue between pregnant women/new mothers and health personnel in health institutions and nurseries) to sensitize mothers about the importance of breastfeeding</li> </ul>
<b>Target 2</b> Between 2000 and 2015, increase the coverage of women with antenatal and postnatal health protection by one third at least	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Coverage of women during the first trimester of pregnancy with modern health protection (% of women who visit a gynaecologist in the first trimester)</li> <li>– Coverage of women attended by at least one polyvalent nurse during pregnancy (% of women who were attended at least once by a polyvalent nurse during pregnancy)</li> <li>– Average number of polyvalent nurse visits to mothers and newborns in the first five days after childbirth</li> </ul>	
<b>Target 3</b> Between 2000 and 2015, halve the mortality rate of children under 19 due to external death causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Specific mortality rate of children under 19 due to external death causes (on 100,000 children of the same age)</li> </ul>	
<b>Target 4</b> Between 2005 and 2015 increase the coverage of exclusively breastfed children from birth to the 6th month of life to at least 30 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Coverage of children with exclusive breastfeeding from birth to the 6th month (%)</li> <li>– Coverage of children with exclusive breastfeeding from birth to the 6th month (%) – Roma</li> </ul>	
<b>Target 5</b> Between 2000 and 2015, increase the mandatory immunization coverage of children to 99 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Measles immunization coverage of children in the first 18 months of life (%)</li> <li>– Immunization coverage for diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough of Roma children in the first year of life (%)</li> </ul>	
<b>MDG 5 » Improve the health of women in child bearing years</b>		
<b>Target 1</b> By 2015, reduce maternal mortality ratio by one fifth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Maternal mortality ratio (women who died of complications during pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium on 100,000 live births)</li> <li>– Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Public campaigns (in mass media, but also promoting dialogue between pregnant women and health personnel in health institutions, and with the active engagement of health personnel in slums) to sensitize the population (especially marginalized groups) about the importance of attended delivery</li> </ul>

Goals/targets	Indicator	Communication for empowerment
<p><b>Target 2</b> By 2015 maintain and enhance reproductive health of women by maintaining fertility rate at a current level, reducing abortion rate by one half and doubling the proportion of women who use modern contraceptive methods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– General fertility rate of women in child bearing years (number of live births on 1,000 women between 15 and 49)</li> <li>– Total fertility rate (number of children per woman)</li> <li>– Abortions during childbearing years (rate on 100,000 women between 15 and 49)</li> <li>– Adolescent abortions (rate on 100,000 women between 15 and 19)</li> <li>– Proportion of women in marriage or steady relationship between 15 and 49 years of age who use some form of modern contraceptive methods (modern methods: pill, intrauterine spiral condom, diaphragm, local chemical contraceptives)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Promote dialogue (through mass media, in school and working places, and with the involvement of youth NGOs) about the importance of reproductive health and for the diffusion of contraceptive methods to prevent abortion</li> </ul>
<p><b>Target 3</b> Between 2000 and 2015 reduce mortality in the group of women in child-bearing years by one third</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Mortality rate due to all causes of death on 100,000 women in child-bearing years</li> <li>– Mortality rate due to cancer on 100,000 women in child-bearing years</li> <li>– Mortality rate due to all causes of death on 100,000 women in child-bearing years – Roma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Campaigns and public discussions to promote preventive health care for women</li> </ul>
<b>MDG 6 » Combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other diseases</b>		
<p><b>Target 1</b> By 2015, reduce the spread of HIV</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Incidence of HIV infected on 1,000,000 persons</li> <li>– AIDS mortality rate on 1,000,000 persons</li> <li>– Condom prevalence rate among young people (between 15 and 24) during high-risk sexual intercourses (%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Promote public dialogue about measure to prevent HIV/AIDS contagion, and to eradicate the stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS</li> </ul>
<p><b>Target 2</b> Enhance the control of tuberculosis through the implementation of DOTS and reach the 95% coverage of successfully treated patients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Tuberculosis incidence on 100,000 persons</li> <li>– Successfully treated newly registered TB cases (%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Campaigns, public dialogue and peer education, with a focus on marginalized groups, about measures to prevent the spread of Tuberculosis</li> </ul>
<p><b>Target 3</b> Between 2000 and 2015, increase life expectancy by 2 years on average and reduce the proportion of the population who assess their health as poor and very poor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Life expectancy at birth – total</li> <li>– Life expectancy at birth – women</li> <li>– Life expectancy at birth – men</li> <li>– Standardized mortality rate from vascular diseases (on 100,000 persons)</li> <li>– Standardized cancer mortality rate (on 100,000 persons)</li> <li>– Standardized mortality rate from injuries, poisoning and other external factors (on 100,000 persons)</li> <li>– Proportion of population older than 16 who assess their health as poor and very poor (%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Public dialogue promoted in mass media, schools, working places and health institutions to sensitize the population, with a focus on socially excluded groups, about the importance of preventive health care (vaccinations, regular medical checks, healthy life style, etc.)</li> </ul>

Goals/targets	Indicator	Communication for empowerment
<b>Target 4</b> Between 2000 and 2015 reduce high-risk behaviour by 10 % on average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Smoking prevalence among children between 13 and 15 years of age (%)</li> <li>– Alcohol use prevalence among children between 12 and 19 (%)</li> <li>– Drug use prevalence among children between 12 and 19 (%)</li> <li>– Smoking prevalence among adults of 20 and more years of age (%)</li> <li>– Children under 5 who are obese</li> <li>– Obesity prevalence among adults of 20 years of age and older (with BMI <math>\geq</math> 30 - %)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Promotion of debates in schools, with the active engagement of teachers, youth organizations and parents, to reduce risk-behaviours among youth</li> </ul>
<b>Target 5</b> By 2010, establish centres for preventive health services in all health centres in Serbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Number of prevention health care centres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Advocacy initiatives by health workers and civil society organizations to stimulate policy makers to invest more on preventive health initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Target 6</b> By 2010, establish mechanisms for monitoring the health of children with special needs and adults living with disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Number of identified children with special needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sensitization campaigns involving people with disabilities to reduce stigma against children with disabilities, include them in society and thus enable a better response to their needs</li> </ul>
<b>MDG 7 » Ensure environmental sustainability</b>		
<b>Target 1</b> Incorporate sustainable development principles into national policies, halt the loss of natural resources and encourage their revitalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Proportion of investments intended for environmental protection relative to GDP</li> <li>– Proportion of land area covered with forest relative to the total area of Serbia</li> <li>– Proportion of land area protected to maintain biodiversity relative to the total area of Serbia</li> <li>– Proportion of households using solid fuels relative to the total number of households</li> <li>– Energy consumption (kg of equivalent petroleum) on USD 1,000 gross national income</li> <li>– Proportion of energy produced from renewable energy sources in total energy consumption (%)</li> <li>– Emission of carbon dioxide per person (ton/person)</li> <li>– Consumption of chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) (metric tons)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Participatory approach and public dialogue, also through mass media and community-level consultations, for the adoption of the Sustainable Development Strategy</li> <li>– Promote public dialogue about energy savings and investment in renewable energy sources</li> </ul>

Goals/targets	Indicator	Communication for empowerment
<b>Target 2</b> Reduce the proportion of the population without adequate supply of drinking water, access to the sewage network and organized household waste collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Proportion of households with access to the public water supply network</li> <li>– Proportion of households with access to the sewage network</li> <li>– Proportion of households with access to the sewage network that has an adequate system for purifying household liquid waste</li> <li>– Proportion of households included in organized household waste collection</li> <li>– Proportion of household waste that is stored at sanitary dump stations relative to total quantity of generated waste</li> <li>– Proportion of physically/chemically and microbiologically adequate water from controlled public water supply systems in relation to the total number of systems under control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Engage in consultations between local self-governments and vulnerable populations or population in remote rural areas who are deprived from access to drinking water and sanitation to identify applicable solutions</li> <li>– Promote dialogue through mass media and at the community level to sensitize the population about differentiated solid waste collection</li> </ul>
<b>Target 3</b> Improve housing conditions for the poor inhabitants of unsanitary settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Proportion of new social flats relative to total number of constructed flats</li> <li>– Number of unsanitary settlements that underwent sanitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Engage in two-way dialogue with slum dwellers to identify adequate solutions to the improvement of their settlements</li> </ul>
<b>MDG 8 » Develop global partnership for development</b>		
<b>Target 1</b> Dynamic and sustainable GDP growth based on assumptions defined in the National Investment Plan and the Strategy for Economic Development until 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– GDP, USD million</li> <li>– GDP per capita, USD</li> <li>– Investments in GDP, %</li> <li>– FDI in GDP, %</li> <li>– Public expenditures in GDP, %</li> <li>– Social welfare expenditures in GDP, %</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Promote public debate and provide public information in a user-friendly way about economic dynamics and economic policies in Serbia</li> </ul>
<b>Target 2</b> Increase access to new technologies to more citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Telephone connections on 1,000 of the population</li> <li>– PC on 1,000 of the population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Advocacy for universal access to ICT and the reduction of the digital divide</li> </ul>
<b>Target 3</b> Increase investments in the development of human resources by around 70 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Education expenditures in GDP, %</li> <li>– Health care expenditures in GDP, %</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Promote public debate about state and local self-government budgeting</li> </ul>
<b>Target 4</b> Increase the share of exports of goods and services in GDP to 55 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Export of goods and services in GDP, %</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Improve communication strategy to promote Serbia and Serbian products abroad</li> </ul>
<b>Target 5</b> Reduce the share of foreign debt in GDP to around 10 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Foreign debt in GDP, %</li> </ul>	

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51

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