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DELIVERING ON THE MDGs: THE MAF IN ACTION

United Nations Development Programme

OVERVIEW

Where are we on the MDGs?

Since the world agreed on the Millennium Declaration in 2000, there has been tremendous global progress on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While accomplishments abound—for example, the global poverty reduction target has been reached—disparities in rates of progress are also apparent: within countries, between countries and across the MDGs. There is an urgent need to focus and prioritize actions towards MDG acceleration.

While we are still a good way from achieving some of the goals and targets, including those on maternal and child health, access to sanitation and the environment—we have also learnt a lot about what works towards accelerating progress.

This knowledge and the countries' own efforts have helped maintain momentum towards the MDGs. For example, the outcome document of the 2010 MDG High-Level Plenary Meeting reaffirmed the importance of the MDGs and the possibilities of making accelerated progress. It drew attention to the crucial relevance of national development plans, policies and strategies that address barriers to progress. Similarly, the outcome document of the Rio+20 Summit confirmed that countries remained firmly committed to these objectives, and emphasized that the formulation of a new global development agenda should not divert focus or effort from the MDGs. The United Nations remains a key partner in this collaborative effort.

Are the MDGs relevant beyond 2015?

Any post 2015 development framework must complete the unfinished business of the MDGs, and capitalize on the knowledge accumulated.

The credibility of a new set of global goals depends on demonstrating our concrete success with the MDGs, and on building and sustaining MDG progress. The MDG benchmarks, including targets and indicators, will help countries to set a robust baseline for measuring development progress beyond 2015.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the MAF?

Many countries have implemented development strategies to achieve the MDGs, but in some the rate of progress has been slow. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF), with technical inputs and collaboration of other United Nations agencies, to support countries in determining how they can accelerate progress in such cases. The MAF is a flexible, yet systematic process of identifying and analyzing bottlenecks and possible high-impact solutions to achieving a country's MDG priorities, which has been endorsed by the UN Development Group. It leads to a concrete plan of action, with coordinated roles for the government, UN agencies and all other development stakeholders.

2. What is MDG acceleration?

An MDG target is considered to be off-track in a country when it is not expected to be met at the current rate of progress. Acceleration increases the rate of progress so that the target can be met by 2015. It results from removing critical bottlenecks that are impeding the implementation of key interventions.

3. Why do we need the MAF? And why now?

In spite of best efforts, many countries risk missing one or more of the MDG targets unless efforts are intensified and focused on achieving the MDG goals and their related targets. However, much has been learned through efforts of the last 12 years, and there is enough evidence on what works and what does not. The Outcome Document of the 2010 MDG High-Level Plenary Meeting called for international cooperation in accelerating MDG achievement; the MAF is one the responses to this call. The Outcome Document of the Rio+20 reinforces this call on the need for focused efforts to accelerate progress.

4. Who is the MAF for?

The MAF was developed for countries with off-track MDG targets at either the national or subnational level. In principle, the MAF can be applied in any country. In practice, it has been shown to be most effective when strong political commitment around off-track MDGs can bring together all key players in a collaborative effort to achieve the goals or targets.

5. How does the MAF work?

The MAF supports governments in devising nationally owned, multi-partner action plans for improving their rate of progress on off-track MDGs, within the context of their existing planning cycle and processes. Once a country identifies an MDG target that is off-track, the MAF supports



Photo: UNDP/Kayla Keenan, Ghana

its government to: (1) identify the strategic interventions required to achieve the MDGs by 2015, (2) prioritize bottlenecks preventing the effective implementation of the priority interventions, (3) determine high-impact and feasible solutions to prioritized bottlenecks, and (4) formulate an action plan for implementation and monitoring. This action plan is a nationally owned, multi-partner programme that fits within existing strategies.

6. How many countries have applied the MAF?

Initially, ten countries piloted the MAF in 2010. That number has now grown to 44 countries, and continues to grow. UN Country Teams have supported these countries in applying the MAF at either the national or subnational level to address a range of MDGs targeting hunger, poverty, maternal health, HIV/AIDS, the economic empowerment of women and others. Results demonstrate the potential of the MAF to make a concrete difference: coherent, focused and implementable MDG actions plans have been formulated and are being implemented. Sub-national applications have the explicit focus on reducing inequalities along identified MDG dimensions.

7. What makes the MAF different from other initiatives?

The MAF is not a standalone initiative to be used by a development organization or donor, but a tool for governments to take ownership of off-track MDGs. It is anchored in existing processes at the country level and takes a cross-sectoral approach to achieving the MDGs. It also has the full endorsement of the United Nations Development Group—the body uniting all of the 32 funds, programmes, agencies, departments and offices of the United Nations that play a role in development.

8. Who are the main players in the country?

The national government leads the process, with support of its partners—the UN Country Team, bilateral and

multilateral agencies, civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The active cooperation and support of development partners is key to ensuring the success of the MAF in coordinating and targeting efforts to execute the implementation plan.

9. So what's next?

The MAF has been strengthened through the pilot experience, and a growing number of UN Country Teams are interested in applying it. For the countries that have already endorsed action plans, the next step is to ensure the effective implementation and coordinated partnership support.

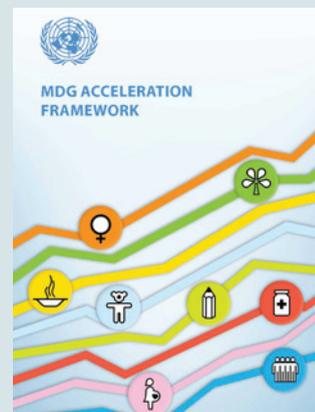
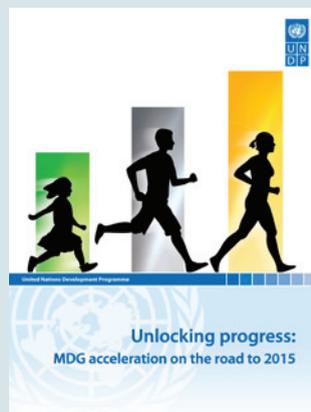
A country interested in applying the MAF can work with its local UN Resident Coordinator's office.

10. Where can I get more information?

The pilot country experience is captured in 'Unlocking Progress: MDG Acceleration on the Road to 2015' (www.tinyurl.com/maf2015).

The MAF Reports, containing the Action Plans, for the respective countries can be found at the UNDP site (www.tinyurl.com/mdg-acc-fr).

The MAF is available at www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=1505.



COUNTRY EXAMPLES

- In **Belize**, the MAF helped the government to identify why rural areas, primarily populated by Mayan communities, were not receiving adequate water and sanitation services. The lack of representation and participation by stakeholders in local water boards and a lack of accountability were identified as the key bottlenecks. Specific measures were then agreed upon to improve the governance of water boards.
- **Cambodia** is the first MAF country to focus on women's economic empowerment at a national level. The MAF in Cambodia will bring together and complement ongoing efforts that include Women's Development Centres (WDCs); technical and vocational education training programmes; entrepreneurship initiatives such as business incubators and small and medium enterprises (SMEs); emerging opportunities in trade and tourism; and gender mainstreaming in policies.
- In **Colombia**, the MAF has been applied at the subnational level across 76 territories, at state and municipal levels. Thematic areas reflect local political priorities and include income generation and job creation; food security and nutrition, and the reproductive health of women. Local governments are partnering with the private sector to implement regional MDG acceleration plans, aimed at reducing poverty and gender inequality in the poorest and most disadvantaged communities.
- The MAF in **Costa Rica** focuses on employment for people with disabilities. It looks at both the supply and demand side of the labour market for people with disabilities. It aims to improve their employability through training services and job placement, as well as increasing the employment and livelihood opportunities available to them through more inclusive enterprises and improving access to entrepreneurship. The impact of the plan is expected to be visible at the municipal level as well as at the provincial and national levels.
- In **Ghana**, the MAF Action Plan is aimed at improving maternal health and works through both health care facilities and communities. Here, the MAF provided the operational framework for a EU grant of EUR 52 million, under the MDG Initiative, and has streamlined various parallel maternal health policy interventions. Moving forward with the implementation, the MAF is facilitating the scaling up of the initiative between the Ghana Health Service and transport unions to provide free transportation to pregnant women to health facilities for delivery.
- In **Indonesia**, the MAF is being applied to address maternal mortality in Central Java, a populous province where the rate of progress in reducing maternal mortality appears to have stalled, although indicators of service provision have improved. The Action Plan highlights actions to improve service quality and access, and will help operationalize the Government's 2010 MDG Roadmap to Accelerate Progress towards the MDGs. The MAF approach is being considered for extension to other provinces, as well as to other MDGs where progress is slow.
- In the **Republic of Moldova**, applying the MAF methodology simultaneously to both HIV and TB resulted in the added value of uncovering systemic issues that went beyond financing and addressed challenges in service delivery, policy and legal frameworks, and governance and coordination mechanisms within and among sectors. The implementation of the MAF Action Plan is currently under discussion with a variety of partners, including government working groups on HIV and TB, representatives from the health and social protection sectors, the National Health Insurance Company, local governments, front-line service delivery agencies, bilateral donors such as the Soros Foundation, and multilateral partners such as the Global Fund to Fight HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria.



- The MAF in the **Niger** is focused on food security and nutrition. The Comprehensive Action Plan was formally endorsed by the government in its Cabinet Meeting of 31 March 2011. The Government of Niger has earmarked USD 30 million for the MAF interventions between 2011 and 2015 starting with USD 6.0 million in 2011 included in the 2011 Finance Act (Budget).

The Prime Minister's office is directly coordinating the implementation of the MAF action plan.

- In **Togo**, the MAF helped to bring an MDG acceleration focus within the existing national investment plan on agriculture and food security—such a focus could lead to rapid gains on the ground—with due care taken to ensure sustainability.



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