

FAST FACTS



United Nations Development Programme

*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

UNDP and Poverty Reduction in Africa



Africa's impressive economic performance over the past decade has rekindled hopes for the continent's future.

Africa's poverty rates have declined, with the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day in the region falling from 56.5 per cent in 1990 to 48.5 per cent in 2010. At that rate, the region will remain about 20 percentage points off the 2015 target.

The challenge for the region is to ensure this growth translates into effective poverty reduction, job creation and narrowing inequalities. Today for instance, African youth represent a disproportionate 60 per cent of the continent's unemployed, and of these 40 million youths, 22 million, many of them women, have given up on finding a job. In countries such as Cameroon, Cape Verde, Ghana, Rwanda and Zambia, poverty is at least three times higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

Poverty reduction lies at the heart of everything UNDP does in Africa to advance human dignity and inclusive development. To bring about deep-rooted change, we help countries act on the multiple and interconnected dimensions of poverty and inequality. Our programmes, among other aims, connect people to livelihoods, secure food sources, better health care and higher standards of living, in addition to empowering them with the ability to make life choices.

MATTERS OF FACT

- Africa's poverty rates have declined, with the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day in the region falling from 56.5 per cent in 1990 to 48.5 per cent in 2010.
- In 2012, African countries, particularly those in the Southern, East, Central and West regions had the world's second highest Global Hunger Index, and most of the region was identified as having serious to alarming levels of hunger.
- Africa's working poor as a share of its total employment stood at 66.2 per cent in 2000, had declined to 51.5 per cent by 2007 and is projected to fall further to 37.2 per cent in 2017.
- Beyond income measurements, poverty can be understood as lack of access to opportunities, including schooling and nutritious food, health, employment, voice and political participation.

UNDP in action

Supporting the MDGs and their aftermath: UNDP has long played an important role as a lead advocate for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the eight internationally-agreed targets to reduce poverty, hunger, maternal and child deaths, disease, gender inequality and environmental degradation by 2015. We are also helping to integrate key development issues in the framework to succeed the MDGs.

UNDP has been helping African countries to collect MDG-related data and devise development plans that use measurable goals and indicators. With UNDP's support, assessments on key MDG bottlenecks were conducted in 39 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and the results were used to formulate poverty reduction strategies consistent with the MDGs. We also formulated an International Assessment which provides an eight-point action agenda to accelerate and sustain development progress until 2015.

UNDP launched a vast global conversation through which people can help shape the future development agenda after 2015 when the MDGs expire. In addition, together with the Africa Union Commission (AUC), the Economic Commission for

Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), UNDP has been helping to bring together stakeholders from across Africa to inform the continent's position on the global development framework beyond 2015.

Promoting Inclusive growth: UNDP works with its government partners in Africa to design policies and interventions which can advance inclusive and sustainable growth. By doing that, countries expand the number of people who participate productively in the economy as well as the number who benefit from its growth. This entails stimulating the sectors where the poor work, generating employment and expanding infrastructure in the areas where the poor live, and increasing access to safe water, sanitation, and reliable energy.

Under the African Facility for inclusive markets, UNDP promotes regional value chain development, including trade links between **Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Tanzania and Uganda**. More than 10,500 smallholder farmers and 80 small and medium enterprises are producing and trading commodities such as sorghum, onions and mangoes, building on better local agricultural extension services, and technology to improve quality and reduce post-harvest losses. Better livelihoods and new jobs have led to higher incomes.

Initiatives to empower and include women are vital in making growth inclusive. In **Kenya**, a joint programme between UNDP, Kenya's Equity Bank and the Ministry of Trade is promoting women business owners through entrepreneurship training programmes that provide access to specially tailored financial products offered by Kenya's Equity Bank. The programme has provided \$5.4 million worth of loans to 350 women business owners.

Making societies more resilient: Shielding the most vulnerable from the worst effects of economic and other shocks and setbacks is key to advancing development over time. Environmental protection and climate change adaptation are also critical because people living in Sub-Saharan Africa, and especially the poor, depend on the region's environment, biodiversity and ecosystems for basic necessities such as energy, food and shelter.

Food security is essential for development, yet more than one in four Africans are undernourished. In the Sahel, UNDP has been supporting the capacities of governments, faced with recurring droughts, to reduce the impact of disasters and address the long-term causes of food insecurity. In **Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger**, UNDP is bringing together local and international development actors around a common plan, known as the MDG Acceleration Framework, to identify bottlenecks and practical solutions to dramatically reduce hunger over time.

UNDP helped the Government of **Burundi** to put into place a 3-stage scheme allowing ex-combatants and people affected by war to rebuild livelihoods through community projects. The participants earn a salary in the first stage, pool their savings for business projects in the second and are supported by micro-finance institutions and business incubators in the third. The programme has created thousands of jobs and improved community relations in the provinces with the highest numbers of internally displaced persons.

Zimbabwe is set to attain universal coverage for AIDS treatment, with support from the Government of Zimbabwe, UNDP, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development and the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The country has achieved one of the sharpest declines in HIV prevalence in Southern Africa, from 27% in 1997 to just over 15% in 2010, according to national data.

Boosting sustainability: Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of people today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Avoiding the unjustified transfer of development risks from present to future generations, without sacrificing reductions in poverty and inequality today at the altar of future environmental concerns—is implicit in UNDP's approach to development and poverty reduction.

In **Namibia**, a vast project funded by the Global Environment Facility is protecting a network of natural reserves, enhancing management of 20 game parks and nature reserve sites and covering almost 14 per cent of the country's land area. In addition, a strong community-based wildlife conservancy programme has been established, creating livelihoods for rural people through employment and income generating activities.

UNDP has been working with the Government of **Rwanda**, Manna Energy Limited, Engineers Without Borders, and others to install solar-powered water purification systems in selected rural community schools. Residents and pupils now have a local source of reliable, clean water, improving health outcomes and boosting school attendance.

With the help of UNDP, **Uganda** incorporated sustainable land management principles into local development plans and budgets, covering dry lands home to 6.6 million Ugandans, many of them poor pastoralists and farmers. The initiative led to the adoption of over 200 district-level environmental plans, advancing land use planning and the adoption of conservation agriculture and sustainable cattle rearing practices. Results from the initiative range from the construction of fuel-efficient cooking stoves to the adoption of regulations requiring buildings to harvest rainwater. *For more information, please visit www.undp.org/africa*



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