

# Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

## Background:

At the Millennium Summit in September 2000 the largest gathering of world leaders in history adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets, with a deadline of 2015 that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions-income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion-while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. They are also basic human rights-the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security.

## Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the eight international development goals that were established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, following the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. All 189 United Nations member states at the time (there are 193 currently), and at least 23 international organizations, committed to help achieve the following Millennium Development Goals by 2015:

- 1. To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
  - a. Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day.
  - b. Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
- 2. To achieve universal primary education**
  - a. Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.
- 3. To promote gender equality**
  - a. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.
- 4. To reduce child mortality**
  - a. Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five.
- 5. To improve maternal health**
  - a. Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio.
- 6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases**
  - a. Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.
  - b. Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
- 7. To ensure environmental sustainability**
  - a. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs; reverse loss of environmental resources.

- b. Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.
- c. Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020.

**8. To develop a global partnership for development**

- a. Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory. Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction—nationally and internationally.
- b. Address the least developed countries' special needs. This includes tariff- and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction.
- c. Address the special needs of landlocked and Small Island developing States.
- d. Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term.
- e. In cooperation with the developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth.
- f. In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.
- g. In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies—especially information and communications technologies.

The world has made significant progress in achieving many of the Goals. Between 1990 and 2002 average overall incomes increased by approximately 21 percent. The number of people in extreme poverty declined by an estimated 130 million<sup>1</sup>. Child mortality rates fell from 103 deaths per 1,000 live births a year to 88. Life expectancy rose from 63 years to nearly 65 years. An additional 8 percent of the developing world's people received access to water. And an additional 15 percent acquired access to improved sanitation services.

But progress has been far from uniform across the world—or across the Goals. There are huge disparities across and within countries. Within countries, poverty is greatest for rural areas, though urban poverty is also extensive, growing, and underreported by traditional indicators.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the epicenter of crisis, with continuing food insecurity, a rise of extreme poverty, stunningly high child and maternal mortality, and large numbers of people living in slums, and a widespread shortfall for most of the MDGs. Asia is the region with the fastest progress, but even there hundreds of millions of people remain in extreme poverty, and even fast-growing countries fail to achieve some of the non-income Goals. Other regions have mixed records, notably Latin America, the transition economies, and the Middle East and North Africa,

often with slow or no progress on some of the Goals and persistent inequalities undermining progress on others.

Each goal has specific targets, and dates for achieving those targets. To accelerate progress, the G8 finance ministers (Canada, France, UK, USA, Germany, Italy, Japan, EU) agreed in June 2005 to provide enough funds to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) to cancel \$40 to \$55 billion in debt owed by members of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) to allow them to redirect resources to programs for improving health and education and for alleviating poverty.

Critics of the MDGs complained of a lack of analysis and justification behind the chosen objectives, and the difficulty or lack of measurements for some goals and uneven progress, among others. Although developed countries' aid for achieving the MDGs rose during the challenge period, more than half went for debt relief and much of the remainder going towards natural disaster relief and military aid, rather than further development.

As of 2013, progress towards the goals was uneven. Some countries achieved many goals, while others were not on track to realize any. A UN conference in September 2010 reviewed progress to date and concluded with the adoption of a global plan to achieve the eight goals by their target date. New commitments targeted women's and children's health, and new initiatives in the worldwide battle against poverty, hunger and disease.