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TRANSITIONING FROM THE MDGs TO THE SDGs

This report captures the main lessons learned from the MDG Acceleration Reviews that took place under the auspices of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) from April 2013 through November 2015. This publication includes analysis and lessons on each of the 16 countries and the one sub region that took part in the Reviews. The exercise, which brought together UN and World Bank Group staff, systematically reviewed the country situation, identified the bottlenecks to MDG attainment, and proposed potential solutions to be implemented to accelerate progress. Since many MDGs have been absorbed into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), many of the observations and solutions provided could prove useful to the implementation of the SDGs.

This work is a product of the staff from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank Group (WBG), as well as contributions from experts from outside these institutions.

The findings, interpretations and conclusions do not necessarily reflect the views of UNDP, the WBG and their Executive Boards or the governments they represent. UNDP and the WBG do no guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this work.

The report was not endorsed by the CEB and does not necessarily reflect the views of all of its members.

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PREFACE

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were an expression of solidarity with the world's poorest and most vulnerable. They translated noble principles and great aspirations into a set of time-bound, shared targets. The Goals mobilized the world to tackle poverty's many dimensions, forming a framework for a global partnership that ushered in a new era of development cooperation. Yet for all the achievements, the international community faced many challenges during this 15-year journey.

In November 2012, with only three years until the MDG deadline, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), under my chairmanship, expressed a determination to step up action to accelerate progress towards the goals. World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim proposed to devote a portion of each subsequent CEB session to overcoming country-level bottlenecks hampering MDG achievement. The intent was to redouble efforts to align the strengths, capacities and expertise of the United Nations system organizations in order to provoke cross-sectoral and cross-institutional thinking, enhance coherence and genuinely deliver as one.

The Executive Heads embraced the opportunity, sending a powerful signal to their organizations and the wider development community that the United Nations system was committed to pursuing a new level of coordination and collaboration to support governments in meeting the MDGs.

What followed was unprecedented – a truly integrated system-wide endeavour, championed jointly by World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim and United Nations Development Programme Administrator Helen Clark. Before the end of 2015, the CEB completed five rounds of review, featuring sixteen countries and the Pacific Islands subregion. The review encompassed MDG targets on poverty and hunger, maternal and child mortality, water and sanitation, education, nutrition, employment and health.

The CEB MDG review triggered actions that have had a notable impact in the participating countries while demonstrating the great potential of an advanced model of country-level collaboration in support of national priorities that is backed by high-level global commitment.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development now sets the vision for the next 15 years of global action. It encompasses the unfinished business of the MDGs but goes well beyond poverty eradication, breaking significant new ground. It is a universal, integrated and human rights-based agenda for sustainable development. It balances economic growth, social justice and environmental stewardship and underlines the links between peace, development and human rights. In tackling this inclusive and interconnected agenda, it is my hope that the United Nations system will draw on and widely apply the integrated, cross-sectoral, "One UN" approach that had generated tangible results in countries participating in the CEB MDG review.

This publication seeks to convey the richness of the country teams' joint efforts to holistically and collaboratively address persistent development challenges and to distil the lessons learned from the CEB MDG review so that governments, United Nations system organizations and partners alike may benefit from its insights as we, together, strive to realize the 2030 Agenda's vision of a life of dignity for all.



Ban Ki-moon
United Nations Secretary-General

FOREWORD

Just weeks after I was appointed President of the World Bank Group, I visited the United Nations headquarters to discuss working more closely with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. We felt there were many opportunities to strengthen our partnership, including embarking on an ambitious joint effort to improve the lives of the poor by accelerating progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The Secretary-General suggested, and I agreed, that the UN Chief Executive Board for Coordination should send a strong signal to our country teams and institutions to work together on this effort. UNDP Administrator Helen Clark and I asked our respective teams to jointly prepare plans with countries to accelerate progress towards reaching MDG goals, and then to present findings to the Chief Executive Board (CEB). Over the following three years, the CEB's MDG review included 16 countries plus one sub-region. The programs covered all regions and all eight MDGs. Across the board, the exercise produced valuable results and relevant lessons – especially on the value of setting targets and using deadlines to meet those targets.

Some country programs delivered strong results almost immediately. The Tanzania government, working with the UN and the World Bank Group, rapidly expanded its social safety net cash transfer program from 20,000 households in three districts to 1.1 million households in all 169 districts. This expansion helped cut extreme poverty in half, spurred infrastructure development, and improved connectivity with all districts. We helped governments scale up similar programs in Indonesia, Burkina Faso, and the Philippines. The Philippines expanded the reach of its cash transfer program to over 3.7 million people in five years. Scaling up these cash transfer programs has been transformative for development, creating numerous positive impacts.

If we are to now achieve the ambitious SDGs by 2030, we face another challenge ahead of us: closing current information gaps in household-level data. These gaps prevent us from knowing if people are rising out of poverty or falling back into it. The World Bank Group has pledged to work with developing countries and international partners to ensure that 78 of the world's poorest nations have household-level surveys completed every three years. The first round is to be completed by 2020. We can do much more to revolutionize countries' ability to collect data, especially with new, transformative technology at our disposal, such as open platforms and mapping tools.

Our CEB experience has changed how we do business and collaborate. In a UNDP-WBG survey of UN resident representatives and World Bank Group country directors, they universally agreed that the MDG-acceleration review improved how the UN and the WBG jointly impacted development results. They said it led to more harmonization, sharing of good practices, improved coordination, enhanced ownership, and a more targeted focus. Therefore, I propose we build on this success in pursuit of the SDGs and find new ways for our country teams to work closely together on specific targets. It is our hope that this publication will inspire all of our country directors and UN resident coordinators to seek ways to collaborate and help countries attain the SDGs in our common goal of ending extreme poverty in the next generation.



Jim Yong Kim
President of the World Bank Group

FOREWORD

When the Millennium Development Goals were adopted, some described them as too aspirational. Today, the world has seen the benefits of promoting a global development agenda. The MDGs were the most specific, measurable and broadly supported poverty reduction targets the world had ever established, and many significant results were achieved. They have been described by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as “the greatest anti-poverty push in history”.

The Sustainable Development Goals are considered to be transformational. We all agree that a business as usual approach will not deliver these goals by 2030. This report presents evidence on the lessons learned from the Chief Executives Board (CEB) MDG Reviews, which the World Bank Group (WBG) President Jim Yong Kim and I championed across our respective teams. The Reviews were a forward-looking exercise meant to foster cross-sectoral collaboration across the UN system to accelerate off-track progress.

Implementation of the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) was backed by the UN CEB for Co-ordination in 2010, and provided the basis for understanding the bottlenecks to progress and then to removing them. This framework allowed for the identification of innovative and pragmatic solutions which brought implementing partners together in a joint push for success.

Much has been learned from the CEB Reviews and the MAF bottleneck assessments. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires an integrated approach which capitalises on the diversity and specialized strengths of individual agencies. For example, in Lao PDR and Nepal, the UN and WBG teams conducted a mapping of agency interventions and geographical presence to focus their efforts better, promote convergence of programmes, and eliminate fragmentation and duplication. Work on implementation of the MAF approach reconfirmed how indispensable country ownership and community mobilization are to ensuring the provision of essential services and scaling up proven interventions. To leave no one behind,

strong engagement with local communities and civil society is required. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the UN Country Team and WBG Team developed a joint strategy to boost community involvement in order to increase demand for health related services, including HIV testing and family planning.

Achieving sustainable development is helped by having humanitarian and development actors working closely together. The CEB Reviews included countries in protracted crises and others recovering from natural disasters – such as Yemen, Colombia, Niger, Burkina Faso and the Philippines. In all of these countries, there was a clear need to pursue holistic approaches to development – seeing it as a continuum of activities which must address the short and medium term needs of people while also seeking long-term sustainable development.

As countries make the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs, it will be critical to invest in key accelerators of progress from the outset. This should include investments in the empowerment of women and girls, sustainable energy for all, and the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity. I hope that the lessons from the CEB Reviews will provide useful guidance for stakeholders in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

I thank the UN and the WB teams at country level and headquarters for their extensive engagement in the CEB Reviews. Our gratitude goes to the host governments that lent their support and saw this initiative as an opportunity to boost the coherence of the UN common system and to accelerate development progress.



Helen Clark

Administrator, United Nations Development Programme

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| GIZ | German Agency for International Cooperation |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| OAS | Organization of American States |
| OECD/DAC | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Agency |
| UNAIDS | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS |
| UNCEB | United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination |
| UNDAP | United Nations Development Assistance Plan |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNIDO | United Nations Industrial Development Organization |
| UNDAF | United Nations Development Assistance Framework |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| WBG | World Bank Group |
| WFP | World Food Programme |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

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