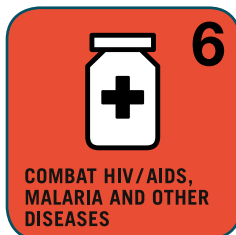




The **Global Drylands** **Imperative**

Implementing the Millennium Development Goals in the Drylands of the World



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Foreword

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were approved by the General Assembly (2000) as part of the UN Secretary General's roadmap for implementing the Millennium Declaration. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg reaffirmed commitment to Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) a decade earlier.

Virtually all developing countries have now adopted MDGs as targets for development. Most donors and international development institutions have begun to re-engineer their approaches and procedures to focus on achieving the goals. For example the September 2005 UN World Summit in New York further confirmed the worldwide acceptance of MDGs as the framework for development, including the specific targets to be achieved by 2015. At the 31st G8 summit meeting in July 2005, European G8 members pledged to devote 0.56 percent of GDP as official development assistance (ODA) by 2010 and 0.7 percent by 2015. The G8 also agreed to cancel the entire \$40 billion debt owed to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund by 18 highly indebted poor countries.

The scene is set for much greater determination to pull the poorest people on the planet out of poverty and help them live decent dignified lives. The challenges are as diverse as they are formidable. Drylands with high poverty rates are always bypassed by development. Previous Challenge Papers have attempted to show that lack of investment in developing the drylands is often due to limited understanding of their importance and potential in achieving the MDGs. The MDGs set challenging targets, and it is important that current misconceptions do not downplay drylands. As previously stated in this series, it will be impossible to meet MDG targets without special attention to drylands.

This paper explores the challenge of meeting MDG targets in countries that have large populations of poor people in isolated and remote locations in arid, semi-arid or dry sub-humid areas. The paper follows in the footsteps of earlier Challenge Papers. Common assumptions on achieving each target are discussed, critiqued, and composite recommendations for achievement set out. Some of the recommendations are very similar to those for more humid environments. However, given their high water stress and remote locations, drylands present special challenges. This paper shows how to overcome these challenges in the context of the MDGs. It also presents a proposal for rapid implementation of the recommendations to ensure results by the 2015 target for most of the eight Millennium Development Goals.

The Global Drylands Imperative (GDI)

The Global Drylands Imperative (GDI) brings together people and institutions interested in promoting sustainable development in drylands. It is an informal group of international organizations, donors, NGOs and individuals interested or actively involved in dryland development. This partnership is dedicated to increasing awareness on the importance of drylands among policy makers and within relevant international forums, with special focus on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Conference of the Parties (COP). The Challenge Papers Series aims to reach decision makers who determine important developments on drylands.

This particular paper, 'Implementing the Millennium Development Goals in the Drylands of the World', is part of the series of Challenge Papers prepared under the auspices of the Global Drylands Imperative. It is available globally, targeted at developing country policy and decision makers and their development partners, drylands development practitioners, and NGOs and international donors and institutions focusing on drylands in the implementation of the MDGs.

Disclaimer

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- Michael Mortimore's paper on 'Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the drylands: poverty, hunger and environmental sustainability';
- Patricia Kameri-Mbote's paper on 'Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the drylands: gender considerations'; and
- Thomas M. Maina's paper on 'Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the drylands: health and welfare related issues'.

The paper also benefited from contributions by individual experts worldwide through an electronic forum conducted in April–May 2006. The forum attracted more than 200 participants and addressed three main issues: Challenges to achieving MDGs in drylands, priority interventions needed to energize implementation of MDGs in drylands and identifying criteria for selecting countries for fast-track implementation of MDGs.

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