

# The Millennium Development Goals Report



UNITED NATIONS

2010



This report is based on a master set of data that has been compiled by an Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, in response to the wishes of the General Assembly for periodic assessment of progress towards the MDGs. The Group comprises representatives of the international organizations whose activities include the preparation of one or more of the series of statistical indicators that were identified as appropriate for monitoring progress towards the MDGs, as reflected in the list below. A number of national statisticians and outside expert advisers also contributed.

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# Foreword

The Millennium Declaration in 2000 was a milestone in international cooperation, inspiring development efforts that have improved the lives of hundreds of millions of people around the world. Ten years later, world leaders will gather again at the United Nations in New York to review progress, assess obstacles and gaps, and agree on concrete strategies and actions to meet the eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The Goals represent human needs and basic rights that every individual around the world should be able to enjoy—freedom from extreme poverty and hunger; quality education, productive and decent employment, good health and shelter; the right of women to give birth without risking their lives; and a world where environmental sustainability is a priority, and women and men live in equality. Leaders also pledged to forge a wide-ranging global partnership for development to achieve these universal objectives.

This report shows how much progress has been made. Perhaps most important, it shows that

the Goals are achievable when nationally owned development strategies, policies and programmes are supported by international development partners. At the same time, it is clear that improvements in the lives of the poor have been unacceptably slow, and some hard-won gains are being eroded by the climate, food and economic crises.

The world possesses the resources and knowledge to ensure that even the poorest countries, and others held back by disease, geographic isolation or civil strife, can be empowered to achieve the MDGs.

Meeting the goals is everyone's business. Falling short would multiply the dangers of our world – from instability to epidemic diseases to environmental degradation. But achieving the goals will put us on a fast track to a world that is more stable, more just, and more secure.

Billions of people are looking to the international community to realize the great vision embodied in the Millennium Declaration. Let us keep that promise.



BAN KI-MOON  
*Secretary-General, United Nations*

# Overview

## Keeping the promise

Five years from the target date for the Millennium Development Goals, leaders from around the world will be gathering at the United Nations to undertake a comprehensive review of progress and together chart a course for accelerated action on the MDGs between now and 2015.

Many countries are moving forward, including some of the poorest, demonstrating that setting bold, collective goals in the fight against poverty yields results. For every life that has benefited from the establishment of a quantitative, time-bound framework of accountability, the MDGs have made a real difference.

But unmet commitments, inadequate resources, lack of focus and accountability, and insufficient dedication to sustainable development have created shortfalls in many areas. Some of these shortfalls were aggravated by the global food and economic and financial crises.

Nevertheless, the data and analysis on the following pages provide clear evidence that targeted interventions, sustained by adequate funding and political commitment, have resulted in rapid progress in some areas. In others, the poorest groups, those without education or living in more remote areas, have been neglected and not provided the conditions to improve their lives.

## Building on successes

The collective efforts towards achievement of the MDGs have made inroads in many areas. Encouraging trends before 2008 had put many regions on track to achieve at least some of the goals. The economic growth momentum in developing regions remains strong and, learning from the many successes of even the most challenged countries, achieving the MDGs is still within our grasp:

- Progress on poverty reduction is still being made, despite significant setbacks due to the 2008-2009 economic downturn, and food and energy crises. The developing world as a whole remains on track to achieve the poverty reduction target by 2015. The overall poverty rate is still expected to fall to 15 per cent by 2015, which translates to around 920 million people living under the international poverty line—half the number in 1990.
- Major advances have been made in getting children into school in many of the poorest countries, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Remarkable improvements in key interventions—for malaria and HIV control, and measles immunization, for example—have cut child deaths from 12.5 million in 1990 to 8.8 million in 2008.
- Between 2003 and 2008, the number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy increased tenfold—from 400,000 to 4 million—corresponding to 42 per cent of the 8.8 million people who needed treatment for HIV.
- Major increases in funding and a stronger commitment to control malaria have accelerated delivery of malaria interventions. Across Africa, more communities are benefiting from bed net protection and more children are being treated with effective drugs.
- The rate of deforestation, though still alarmingly high, appears to have slowed, due to tree-planting schemes combined with the natural expansion of forests.
- Increased use of improved water sources in rural areas has narrowed the large gap with urban areas, where coverage has remained at 94 per cent—almost unchanged since 1990. However, the safety of water supplies remains a challenge and urgently needs to be addressed.
- Mobile telephony continues to expand in the developing world and is increasingly being used for m-banking, disaster management and other non-voice applications for development. By the end of 2009, cellular subscriptions per 100 people had reached the 50 per cent mark.

## Bridging the gaps

Though progress has been made, it is uneven. And without a major push forward, many of the MDG targets are likely to be missed in most regions. Old and new challenges threaten to further slow progress in some areas or even undo successes achieved so far.

The most severe impact of climate change is being felt by vulnerable populations who have contributed least to the problem. The risk of death or disability and economic loss due to natural disasters is increasing globally and is concentrated in poorer countries. Armed conflict remains a major threat to human security and to hard-won MDG gains. Large populations of refugees remain in camps with limited opportunities to improve their lives. In 2009, 42 million people had been displaced by conflict or persecution, four fifths of them in developing countries.

The number of people who are undernourished has continued to grow, while slow progress in reducing the prevalence of hunger stalled—or even reversed itself—in some regions between 2000-2002 and 2005-2007. About one in four children under the age of five are underweight, mainly due to lack of food and quality food, inadequate water, sanitation and health services, and poor care and feeding practices.

An estimated 1.4 billion people were still living in extreme poverty in 2005. Moreover, the effects of the global financial crisis are likely to persist: poverty rates will be slightly higher in 2015 and even beyond, to 2020, than they would have been had the world economy grown steadily at its pre-crisis pace.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are at the heart of the MDGs and are preconditions for overcoming poverty, hunger and disease. But progress has been sluggish on all fronts—from education to access to political decision-making.

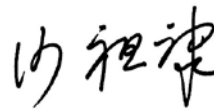
Achieving the MDGs will also require increased attention to those most vulnerable. Policies and interventions will be needed to eliminate the persistent or even increasing inequalities between the rich and the poor, between those living in rural or remote areas or in slums versus better-off urban populations, and those disadvantaged by geographic location, sex, age, disability or ethnicity:

- In all developing regions, children in rural areas are more likely to be underweight than urban children. In Latin America and the Caribbean and parts of Asia, this disparity increased between 1990 and 2008.
- The gap between the richest and the poorest households remains enormous. In Southern Asia, 60 per cent of children in the poorest areas are underweight compared to 25 per cent of children in the richest households.
- In developing regions overall, girls in the poorest 20 per cent of households are 3.5 times more likely to be out of school than girls in the richest households and four times more likely to be out of school than boys from the richest households.
- Even in countries close to achieving universal primary education, children with disabilities are the majority of those excluded.
- Maternal health is one of the areas in which the gap between rich and poor is most conspicuous. While almost all births are attended by skilled health personnel in the developed countries, less than half of women receive such care when giving birth in parts of the developing world.
- Disparities in access to care during pregnancy are also striking, with women in the richest households 1.7 times more likely to visit a skilled health worker at least once before birth than the poorest women.
- Lack of education is another major obstacle to accessing tools that could improve people's lives. For instance, poverty and unequal access to schooling perpetuate high adolescent birth rates, jeopardizing the health of girls and diminishing their opportunities for social and economic advancement.
- Contraceptive use is four times higher among women with a secondary education than among those with no education. For women in the poorest households and among those with no education, negligible progress was seen over the last decade.
- Only about half of the developing world's population are using improved sanitation, and addressing this inequality will have a major impact on several of the MDGs. Disparities between rural and urban areas remain daunting, with only 40 per cent of rural populations covered. And while 77 per cent of the population in the richest 20 per cent of households use improved sanitation facilities, the share is only 16 per cent of those in the poorest households.

## Towards 2015

The Millennium Declaration represents the most important promise ever made to the world's most vulnerable people. The MDG framework for accountability derived from the Declaration has generated an unprecedented level of commitment and partnership in building decent, healthier lives for billions of people and in creating an environment that contributes to peace and security.

The Millennium Development Goals are still attainable. The critical question today is how to transform the pace of change from what we have seen over the last decade into dramatically faster progress. The experience of these last ten years offers ample evidence of what works and has provided tools that can help us achieve the MDGs by 2015. The Millennium Development Goals summit in September will be an opportunity for world leaders to translate this evidence into a concrete agenda for action.



SHA ZUKANG  
Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

# Goal 1

## Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

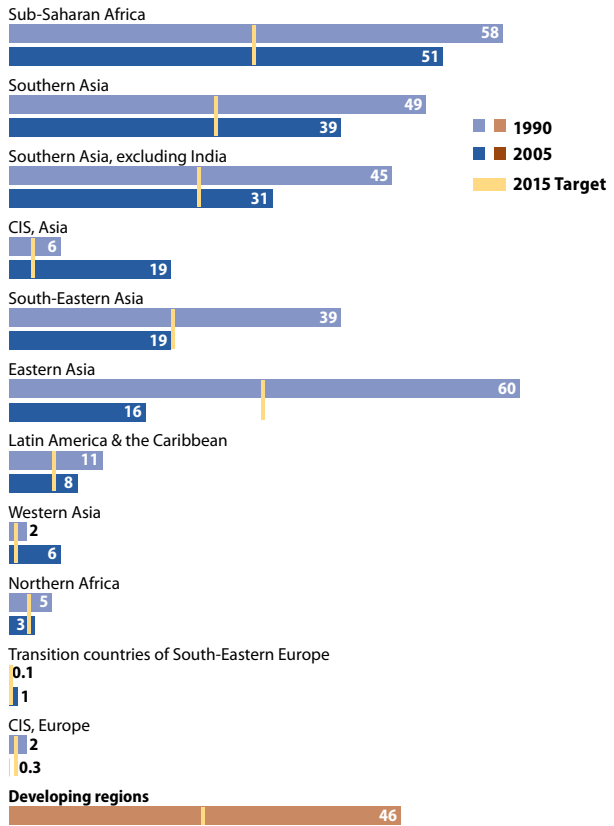


### TARGET

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day

The global economic crisis has slowed progress, but the world is still on track to meet the poverty reduction target

Proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day, 1990 and 2005 (Percentage)



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