

The Millennium Development Goals Report



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MDG success springboard for new sustainable development agenda: UN report

MANY ACHIEVEMENTS MADE IN MDGs IN WESTERN ASIA ARE THREATENED BY CONFLICTS

NEW YORK, 6 JULY 2015—The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have produced the most successful anti-poverty movement in history and will serve as the jumping-off point for the new sustainable development agenda to be adopted this year, according to the final MDG report launched today by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015 found that the 15-year effort to achieve the eight aspirational goals set out in the Millennium Declaration in 2000 was largely successful across the globe, while acknowledging shortfalls that remain. The data and analysis presented in the report show that with targeted interventions, sound strategies, adequate resources and political will, even the poorest can make progress.

“Following profound and consistent gains, we now know that extreme poverty can be eradicated within one more generation”, said Ban Ki-moon. “The MDGs have greatly contributed to this progress and have taught us how governments, business and civil society can work together to achieve transformational breakthroughs”.

GOALS AND TARGETS WORK

The MDG report confirms that goal-setting can lift millions of people out of poverty, empower women and girls, improve health and well-being, and provide vast new opportunities for better lives.

Only two short decades ago, nearly half of the developing world lived in extreme poverty. The number of people now living in extreme poverty has declined by more than half, falling from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015.

The world has also witnessed dramatic improvement in gender equality in schooling since the MDGs, and gender parity in primary school has been achieved in the majority of countries.

More girls are now in school, and women have gained ground in parliamentary representation over the past 20 years in nearly 90 per cent of the 174 countries with data. The average proportion of women in parliament has nearly doubled during the same period. The rate of children dying before their fifth birthday has declined by more than half, dropping from 90 to 43 deaths per 1,000 live births since 1990. The maternal mortality ratio shows a decline of 45 per cent worldwide, with most of the reduction occurring since 2000.

Targeted investments in fighting diseases, such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, have brought unprecedented results. Over 6.2 million malaria deaths were averted between 2000 and 2015, while tuberculosis prevention, diagnosis and treatment interventions saved an estimated 37 million lives between 2000 and 2013.

Worldwide, 2.1 billion have gained access to improved sanitation and the proportion of people practicing open defecation has fallen almost by half since 1990. Official development assistance from developed countries saw an increase of 66 per cent in real terms from 2000 and 2014, reaching \$135.2 billion.

REGIONAL PROGRESS

The MDG Report 2015 found that Western Asia has made significant progress in many MDG goals. However, war, civil unrest and a rapidly growing number of refugees are threatening many of the achievements.



Western Asia achieved the target of halving the extreme poverty rate ahead of schedule. The proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day declined from 5.3 per cent in 1990 to 1.5 per cent in 2011. However, the extreme poverty rate in the region is expected to increase between 2011 and 2015, from 1.5 per cent to 2.6 per cent. The hunger reduction target remains distant for the region. Western Asia is the only region that has seen a rise in the prevalence of undernourishment from 1990–1992 to 2014–2016, which is due to conflicts.

Improvements in child survival and maternal health are evident in the region. Western Asia has almost met the target of a two-thirds reduction in the under-five mortality rate. Significant progress has been made in improving access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and the region has already met both targets. The terrestrial area under protection in Western Asia has more than quadrupled, from 3.7 per cent in 1990 to 15.4 per cent in 2014.

The region has also made good progress in expanding access to primary education and improving gender parity at all levels of education. The adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education grew from 86 per cent in 2000 to 95 per cent in 2015. Many more girls are enrolled in school compared with 15 years ago. Western Asia is the only developing region in which gender parity was reached in tertiary education.

Despite the progress in Western Asia, the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic has had a devastating impact on children's education. Data from the Syrian Ministry of Education indicate that enrolment rates fell by 34 percentage points for grades 1 to 12 in the school year ending in 2013.

INEQUALITIES PERSIST

The report highlighted that significant gains have been made for many of the MDG targets worldwide, but progress has been uneven across regions and countries, leaving significant gaps. Conflicts remain the biggest threat to human development, with fragile and conflict-affected countries typically experiencing the highest poverty rates.

Gender inequality persists in spite of more representation of women in parliament and more girls going to school. Women continue to face discrimination in access to work, economic assets and participation in private and public decision-making.

Despite enormous progress driven by the MDGs, about 800 million people still live in extreme poverty and suffer from hunger. Children from the poorest 20 per cent of households are more than twice as likely to be stunted as those from the wealthiest 20 per cent and are also four times as likely to be out of school. In countries affected by conflict, the proportion of out-of-school children increased from 30 per cent in 1999 to 36 per cent in 2012.

In the context of the environment, global emissions of carbon dioxide have increased over 50 per cent since 1990 and water scarcity now affects 40 per cent of people in the world and is projected to increase.

NEW SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

World leaders have called for an ambitious long-term sustainability agenda to succeed the MDGs. Building on the success and momentum of the MDGs, new global goals will break fresh ground with ambition on inequalities, economic growth, decent jobs, cities and human settlements, industrialization, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, peace and justice.

“The emerging post-2015 development agenda, including the set of Sustainable Development Goals, strives to build on our successes and put all countries, together, firmly on track towards a more prosperous, sustainable and equitable world”, concluded Ban Ki-moon.

BACKGROUND

The Millennium Development Goals Report, an annual assessment of global and regional progress towards the Goals, reflects the most comprehensive, up-to-date data compiled by over 28 UN and international agencies. It is produced by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. A complete set of the data used to prepare the report is available at mdgs.un.org. For more information, press materials and an inter-agency media contact list, see www.un.org/millenniumgoals.

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