

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

During the Millennium Summit held in New York in September 2000, all 189 UN Member States adopted the Millennium Declaration, which contained a group of goals and targets that have since become known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals, working together, aim to halve poverty by 2015.

The Goals include measurable, time-bound targets addressing poverty and hunger, education, maternal and child health, the prevalence of diseases including HIV/AIDS, gender equality, the environment, debt, trade justice and aid.

The latest United Nations assessment, published in June 2006, shows that progress towards each of the millennium development goals in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole is either slightly or seriously off track. However, many countries in the region will achieve some of the goals by 2015, or make substantial progress towards them.

Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development



Goal 1: Hunger

- Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day
- Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Progress:

Income: At a regional level, Asia is making good progress, driven by growth in China and more recently in India. However in sub-Saharan Africa, the absolute number of poor is still rising and is projected to stand at 336 million by 2015. By 2015, over 90% of people living in extreme poverty are expected to live in either South Asia or Africa.

Hunger: More people go hungry, even though worst hit regions show improvement with declining rates of hunger. Of particular concern is Eastern Asia where the number of people hungry is on the rise.¹



Goal 2: Ensure access to primary schooling for all children

Fact: 115 million primary school age children remain out of school²

- Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

While some progress has been made globally over the past decade, universal primary education will not be achieved by 2015, unless we take urgent action

Ed Balls, Economic Secretary to the Treasury

¹ Source: UN, Millennium Development Goals Report 2006

² Source: UNICEF's State of the World's Children report

Progress: Universal primary education is in sight although sub-Saharan Africa lags behind. The global primary net enrolment ratio (NER) rose from 83% in 1999 to 86% in 2004. However, 115 million primary school age children remain out of school. Seven out of ten of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa or South and West Asia. The quality of schooling and levels of learning achievement remain major issues everywhere. Rural children are less likely to attend school and an educational gender gap persists.³



Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

When a country educates both its boys and its girls, economic productivity tends to rise, maternal and infant mortality rates usually fall, fertility rates decline, and the health and education prospects of the next generation improve.⁴

- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015

In education, we are not on course to achieve equal enrolment of girls and boys by 2015, and net enrolment worldwide may only be around 87%

Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development

Progress: Substantial progress has been made in South Asia but in Arab States, West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa where overall about 90 girls are enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys progress is lagging. In addition, a number of factors contribute to lower completion rates among girls. Women inch forward in labour markets of all regions, though deep inequalities remain. Progress in eliminating gender disparities in non agricultural employment and seats in parliament is also lagging, although notable improvements have occurred in a number of countries.



Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Fact: Every year almost 11 million children in developing countries die before the age of five.⁵

- Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the number of children 5 years old or younger who die from preventable illnesses

Given that over 270 million children worldwide have no access to healthcare, we are not on track to meet the child mortality goal

Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development

Progress: Unless efforts are increased, particularly in sub-saharan Africa and Asia, there is little hope of eliminating avoidable child deaths. Three out four children are protected against measles but it still kills close to half a million children each year. More children are surviving

³ Source: UN Millennium Development Goals Report, 2006

⁴ Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators 2005

⁵ Source: World Bank Group

their first years in life but if current trends continue the MDG will not be achieved until 2045 – 30 years late.⁶



Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Fact: More than 500,000 women die each year in childbirth, most of them in developing countries.⁷

- Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the number of women who die giving birth

Progress: Though all regions show improvement, ratios of maternal mortality seem to have changed little in regions where most deaths occur (sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia). Three regions show dramatic gains in the number of assisted deliveries with Eastern and South-Eastern Asia and Northern Africa making the most headway (increases in attended births of between 55 and almost 80 per cent). Inequality between urban and rural care at delivery still exists within many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. In 33 sub-Saharan countries with data, urban women are over three times more likely to deliver with health personnel than women in rural areas.



Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Fact: Worldwide, 39.5 million adults and children are living with HIV/AIDS and almost 4.3 million new infections have occurred in 2006.⁸

Fact: There are 300 to 500 million cases of malaria each year, leading to more than 1 million deaths.

Fact: Tuberculosis kills some 2 million people a year, most of them 15 to 45 years old.

- Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Progress:

HIV/AIDS - Several countries report success in reducing HIV infection rates, through interventions that promote behaviour change. However rates of infection overall are still growing and deaths continue to increase. There were 1 million new infections in 2005 and the number of AIDS-related deaths also increased that year, to 2.8 million. The number of people living with HIV has risen from 36.2 million in 2003 to 38.6 million in 2005. The epidemic remains centred in sub-Saharan Africa, with just over 10 per cent of the world's people but being home to 64 per cent of HIV-positive people and to 90 per cent of children (under 1) living with the virus. Twelve million sub-Saharan African children are orphans

⁶ Source: UN Millennium Development Goals Report 2006

⁷ Source: World Bank Group

⁸ Source: UNAIDS

Malaria and other major diseases - The fight against malaria has taken off with a growing awareness matched with increased financial assistance. In just four years (1999-2003), distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets increased 10-fold in sub-Saharan Africa. However new tuberculosis cases are on the rise, at a rate of 1 per cent per year, with the fastest increases in sub-Saharan Africa. This excluding those associated with HIV.



Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Sub-Sahara Africa is the region where the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets on water and sanitation are most off-track. In water we need to bring clean water to 300,000 people each day, every day for the next ten years to meet the goal. That's like supplying water to the cities of Edinburgh, Belfast, Cardiff and Birmingham, every week, every month, every year for the next decade. In sanitation we have to double our current global effort.

Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development

Fact: 1.1 billion people still don't have access to safe drinking water.⁹

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources
- Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
- By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Progress:

Sustainable Development: Rapid deforestation continues at an alarmingly high rate – about 1 million hectares per year, but the net loss of forest area is slowing down (due to forest planting, landscape restoration and natural forest expansion). There has been decisive and concerted action resulting in drastic reductions of ozone-depleting substances with developed nations having virtually eliminated ozone-depleting substances, and the developing world not being far behind. Energy use has become more efficient in most regions, with transition economies and Eastern and Southern Asia showing the greatest gains in efficiency. However due to population and economic growth, overall global CO₂ emissions continue to rise, especially in the developing world, where growth has been most rapid.

Safe drinking water and basic sanitation - With half of developing country populations still lacking basic sanitation, the world is unlikely to reach its target. 1.2 billion people gained access to sanitation between 1990 and 2004. Another 300 million people should have been served, however, to keep the world on track towards the 2015 target. World targets for safe drinking water are in sight, reaching 80 per cent in 2004. However coverage remains spotty in rural areas.

Improvement in the lives of slum dwellers - In 2007, for the first time in history, the majority of people will live in urban areas. Throughout most of the developing world, this will result in larger slum populations. Cities in sub-Saharan Africa are growing most rapidly, and almost all of this growth has been in slums. Northern Africa is the only developing region where the quality of urban life is improving.

⁹ Source: Department for International Development, DFID, March 2006



Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development (trade/aid/debt)

Africa is probably the richest continent below the ground, but the poorest above ground. All we ask for is justice, a fair trade system.

Kumi Naidoo, Secretary General and CEO, CIVICUS

Fact: Low-income countries paid \$26 billion in debt service on public debt in 2004. Middle-income countries paid \$173 billion. The debt relief program for the most heavily indebted poor countries has reduced future debt payments for 28 nations by \$59 billion since 1998, bringing their debt service payments to less than seven percent of their export earnings. But for many poor countries, even this reduced level is too high.¹⁰

- Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system
- Address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) [Includes: tariff and quota free access for LDC exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA (Overseas Development Assistance) for countries committed to poverty reduction]
- Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the 22nd special session of the General Assembly)
- Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term
- In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth
- In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries
- In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

Progress:

Aid & Debt relief - Led by debt relief, development assistance has increased sharply but still falls short of targets. Only five countries - Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden - have met the United Nations aid target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income. Eleven more European Union countries have pledged to do so by 2015. If all donors honour their commitments, aid is expected to reach \$10 billion by 2010. Debt service burdens have decreased, but for many poor countries even these levels are too high. In 2005 it was decided that the IMF, World Bank and African Development Fund would cancel the debts of 19 countries that have met the requirements of the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. Eleven other countries remain potentially eligible for debt relief under the initiative, but are kept out of the running by conflict, poor governance and arrears in payments.

Trade - Three quarters of exports from developing countries entered developed markets duty-free in 2004, with the figure rising to 79 per cent for the least developed countries.

Youth - Job prospects for youth have declined in most regions due to their high population growth. Youth now represent close to half of the world's 192 million jobless people.

¹⁰ Source: World Bank Group

Drug Access: Access to essential drugs, especially those for treating HIV, has expanded in the developing world with the number of people on antiretroviral therapy in low- and middle-income countries increased fivefold, from 20,000 to 1.3 million between 2001 and 2005.

New Technologies: Access to information and communication technologies grows steadily, especially in the mobile sector, but the 'digital divide' persists separating developed and developing regions. Over half the population in developed regions had access to the Internet, compared to 7 per cent in developing regions

Sources

World Bank Group

Department for International Development Report, March 2006

UN Millennium Development Goals Report 2006

UNAIDS

World Bank, World Development Indicators 2005

UNICEF's State of the World's Children report