

The UK misled the public on world poverty promises, and evidence on progress

Matt Berkley

2 July 2016

The Millennium Development Goals had a standard 1990 baseline. But the actual pledges by world leaders in 2000 did not.

"We resolve...by the year 2015...to have reduced maternal mortality by three quarters, and under-five child mortality by two thirds, of their current rates. ...

To ensure...the right of the public to have access to information. ...

We request the General Assembly to review on a regular basis the progress made in implementing the provisions of this Declaration, and ask the Secretary-General to issue periodic reports ...

We...pledge our unstinting support for these common objectives and our determination to achieve them."

Millennium Declaration

8 September 2000

In 2006, the United States position was still that it had not agreed the "MDG" structure proposed by civil servants in September 2001 but had agreed the Declaration.

The child mortality pledge in the Declaration, assuming constant progress and reliable statistics, was for below about 3.6 million child deaths in 2015, not the 4.3 million implied by the MDG target. The difference in 2000-15 would be about 5 million children saved, rising as time passes - very roughly 2,000 children per day in 2015 and in 2016.

"Since the MDGs were adopted in the year 2000, we've made huge strides forwards."

David Cameron

September 2015

gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-to-the-un-sustainable-development-goals-summit-2015

"....Prime Minister of this country for 6 years. I believe we have made great steps, with more people in work than ever before in our history, with reforms to welfare and education, increasing people's life chances, building a bigger and stronger society, keeping our promises to the poorest people in the world..."

David Cameron

Resignation speech

24 June 2016

gov.uk/government/speeches/eu-referendum-outcome-pm-statement-24-june-2016.ko

A promise to the poorest people was to publicise the Millennium Declaration:

"We shall support the United Nations in the implementation of a global information campaign on the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. In that respect, we would like to encourage the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations and the private sector."

Final text of agreements and commitments adopted at the International Conference on Financing for Development

Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002

http://www.ycsg.yale.edu/assets/downloads/monterrey_consensus.pdf

"All nations were united by a common purpose when the Millennium Declaration was issued 14 years ago. And we agreed then, and I quote, that "... Democratic and participatory

governance based on the will of the people best assures these rights.” ”

UK Ambassador to the UN
25 April 2014

How can there be "democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people", if government misstates its commitments, and evidence for progress in the human species?

Is this not a human rights matter?

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Note

The text is not meant to imply endorsement of any statistical method or any statistical claims.

UK committed to 2000-baseline targets even before the Millennium Summit

"Mr. Hain: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has worked hard to build international support for the UN Secretary-General's proposals for the Millennium Summit."

House of Commons Hansard Written Answers for 15 May 2000 (pt 9)

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmhansrd/vo000515/text/00515w09.htm>

The Secretary-General's proposals for money and water had a baseline of 2000.

"Let us resolve therefore:

- To halve, by the time this century is 15 years old, the proportion of the world's people (currently 22 per cent) whose income is less than one dollar a day.

- To halve, by the same date, the proportion of people (currently 20 per cent) who are unable to reach, or to afford, safe drinking water."

"Specifically, I urge the Summit to adopt the target of reducing by half, between now and 2015, the proportion of people who lack ...safe water."

Secretary-General, Millennium Report

www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/We_The_Peoples.pdf

<http://web.archive.org/web/20150821152153/http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan000923.pdf>

"President Clinton is strongly committed to working...to meet the vision of a sustainable future outlined in the Secretary General's Millennium Report."

The White House September 7, 2000

http://clinton5.nara.gov/WH/new/html/Wed_Oct_4_133235_2000.html

"Annan...asked the United Nation's 188 member states to set such ambitious goals as...cutting in half the proportion of people, currently 22 percent of the global population, who earn less than \$1 a day"

4 April 2000

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2000/04/04/annan-seeks-debate-on-un-future-in-millennium-report/b5aef075-4e01-4094-8254-b45f82a3d418/>

"secretary-general...suggests...that the world could try to halve by 2015 the figure of 1.2 billion people or 22% of its population, who currently exist in extreme poverty on less than \$1 a day."

6 April 2000

<http://www.economist.com/node/299914>

Millennium Declaration has a 2000 baseline

As stated by Thomas Pogge for over a decade, the Millennium Declaration has no 1990 baseline, but mentions "current rates" for child and maternal mortality.

It in effect has a 2000 baseline for the relevant commitments.

Others who have written the same thing include Peter Singer, George Kent, Frances Moore Lappe and in a reversal of his previous position John McArthur, former deputy director of the UN Millennium Project.

For example:

Thomas Pogge
Millions Killed by Clever Dilution of Our Promise
2010
<http://www.crop.org/viewfile.aspx?id=218>

The General Assembly did not, as some academics and experts have claimed, mention the easier MDG targets, or a report annex containing them, in 2001.

The head of the UN Development Programme in 2000 wrote later of Kofi Annan's report to the Millennium Summit, which had a baseline of 2000:

"The assembly ...accepted his report wholesale."

Mark Malloch Brown
The Unfinished Global Revolution
Penguin Books, 2011

Mark Malloch Brown had written in 2004, misleadingly, that leaders agreed the MDGs. In reality these, in several well-known cases, came with 1990 baselines. He wrote:

"These Millennium Development Goals did not come out of thin air. They were agreed at the historic UN Millennium Summit in 2000"

Targeting Development

Routledge

2004

samples.sainsburysebooks.co.uk/9781134410804_sample_527274.pdf

He continued:

"[the MDGs] also lie at the heart of the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan agreed at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002."

However, the Monterrey outcome document of March 2002 does not mention "Millennium Development Goals" at all.

National representatives at the Monterrey meeting spoke of the Declaration.

A phrase they did use in their outcome document was,

"the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration".

Nations agreed:

"We should encourage...coordination...to meet the Millennium Declaration development goals".

http://www.ycsg.yale.edu/assets/downloads/monterrey_consensus.pdf

http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/WSSD_PlanImpl.pdf

The 2002 Johannesburg Declaration of the World Summit for Sustainable Development mentions MDGs. But the plan which leaders embraced at that summit mentions a 2000 baseline, not the 1990 baseline of the MDGs:

"We, the representatives of the peoples of the world...commit ourselves to...expedite... the... targets..."

....reduce, by 2015, mortality rates...under 5 by two thirds, and maternal mortality rates by three quarters, of the prevailing rate in 2000... "

World Summit on Sustainable Development

4 September 2002

<http://www.un-documents.net/jburgdec.htm>

http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/WSSD_PlanImpl.pdf

In 2000, the media reported a 2000 baseline for the Millennium pledges

"summit...will almost certainly endorse a UN declaration... halving within 15 years the 22% of the world's population now existing on less than a dollar a day."

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2000/sep/02/cuba.ewenmacaskill>

"...Millennium Declaration ... endorsed targets... halving by the year 2015 the 22 percent of the world's population now existing on less than a dollar a day."

Reuters

8 September 2000

itnsource.com/en/shotlist/RTV/2000/09/08/009080017/?s=millennium%20summit

"the targets set by the Millennium Summit, including the target to halve, by the year 2015, the current proportion of the world's poor people"

Nguyen Dzy Nien
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Vietnam
General Debate of the 55th Session of the UN General Assembly
13 September 2000
<http://www.un.org/ga/webcast/statements/vietnamE.htm>

"Setting out to halve in fifteen years the number of poor people we now have is an undoubtedly remarkable endeavor..."

Felipe Perez Roque
Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs
General Debate of the 55th General Assembly
<http://www.un.org/ga/webcast/statements/cubaE.htm>
15 September 2000

"Proponernos reducir a la mitad, dentro de quince años, el número de pobres que hoy tenemos, es un empeño sin duda encomiable..."

<http://www.un.org/ga/webcast/statements/cubaS.htm>

"Baseline year – 1990 or 2000?"

...In two cases - maternal mortality and under-five mortality - the term "current rates" is used, directly specifying a 2000 baseline. For the remainder, the targets are stated in the form of "to halve by 2015..." This would imply a 2000 baseline year of the Millennium Declaration.."

Guidance Note sent by heads of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP to country offices
United Nations Development Group
Reporting on the Millennium Development Goals at the Country Level
October 2001
http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://undg.org/archive_docs/2356-English.doc

The guidance note was sent by UNDG chairman Mark Malloch Brown and three other heads of UN agencies on 6 November 2001:

</web/20150821152153/http://web.archive.org/web/20140815174058//web/20150821152153/>

http://www.undg.org/archive_docs/1607-MDGs - letter - MDGs - letter.pdf

"1.2 billion people around the World live in extreme poverty. They live on less than one dollar-a-day. They constitute approximately one fifth of the World population. In the United Nations Millennium Declaration we decided to reduce this share by half in 2015. ...the target of halving the number [?] of poor by 2015."

Per Stir Møller, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Statement at the International Conference on Financing for Development Monterrey, Mexico
18th-22th March 2002

"...in the year 2000 we had 150 heads of states and government and princes come to the UN ...They have challenged us to reduce abject poverty by 50 per cent between now and 2015."

Secretary-General

Press conference

Boston, 6 May 2002

<http://www.un.org/sg/offthecuff/?nid=67>

<http://www.un.org/sg/cuffarch/sgcu0402.shtml>

"...half, between now and 2015, the proportion of people who lack...safe water and...sanitation ...

This ambitious target...was endorsed at the Millennium Assembly ...in September 2000."

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

23 February 2001

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Note by the secretariat

<daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/NB0/100/09/PDF/NB010009.pdf?OpenElement>

"The General Assembly...

Reaffirming the goal of reducing by half, between 2000 and 2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water..."

Resolution 56/192

21 December 2001

http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/56/192

<http://www.worldlii.org/int/other/UNGA/2001/301.pdf>

The IDGs - International Development Goals - were devised in 1996 by the rich countries' club, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. They had 1990 baselines.

"The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) emerged in 2001 as a compromise between the IDGs and the Millennium Declaration, with a view to avoiding separate development agendas. While the IDGs essentially became the basis for the MDGs..."

http://www.oecd.org/derec/adb/ADB_supportforAchievingMDG_Post2015.pdf

"IN 2001, THE UN SECRETARIAT...FORMULATED A SET OF GOALS AND SUBSIDIARY TARGETS AND INDICATORS, AND CHRISTENED THEM "MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS." THEY ARE SOLELY A SECRETARIAT PRODUCT, NEVER HAVING BEEN FORMALLY ADOPTED BY MEMBER STATES."

*... SUBJECT: THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS) -- WHAT ARE THEY?
04/26/05*

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS COLLECTIVE

US State Department

26 April 2005

pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pcaab560.pdf

A Foreign Office spokesman said ... it was "important that we do not row back from...the UN millennium summit."

August 27, 2005

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2005/aug/27/uk.usa>

The General Assembly did not mention "Millennium Development Goals" in 2000 or 2001

The following passage by a former UK Department for International Development Director General is sensible except for an error about what the General Assembly did nor did not mention in 2001.

"...(MDGs), of which the authoritative version was contained in an Annex to a 'Road Map' produced by the Secretary-General in September 2001...

...the Annex to the 'Road Map' was not formally endorsed by the UN membership, but merely described as 'a useful guide' in the relevant Resolution, and that the subsequent updating has been carried out by the so-called Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Millennium Development Goal Indicators, a body whose status is pleasingly unclear.

Nevertheless, despite this less than robust formal basis, there can be no doubt that the MDGs have become highly influential at least at the level of international discourse about development."

The Impact and Design of the MDGs: Some Reflections

Richard Manning

2010

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2010.00098.x/abstract>

Richard Manning is correct that there was no formal endorsement of the Secretary-General's Annex containing the MDGs. However, the General Assembly in 2001 in fact recommended the 58-page "Road Map", not its Annex containing the MDGs, as a useful guide in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

The Road Map is at:

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/sgreport2001.pdf>

The relevant resolution, 56/95, did not mention "MDGs", eight goals, an Annex to the Road Map, or 1990. Instead it called for the Declaration, which has a 2000 baseline, to be better publicised.

It requested the Secretary-General to report every five years on "all the commitments made in the Declaration".

"Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

56/95. Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000, by which it adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration as the outcome of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations, held at Headquarters from 6 to 8 September 2000,

Recalling also its resolution 55/162 of 14 December 2000, in which it, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to prepare a long-term "road map" towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration within the United Nations system and to submit it to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session,

Reaffirming the need to maintain the will and momentum of the Millennium Summit, as well as the importance of a comprehensive and balanced approach in the implementation of and follow-up to the Millennium Declaration,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration";

2. Recommends that the "road map" be considered as a useful guide in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration by the United Nations system, and invites Member States, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and other interested parties to consider the "road map" when formulating plans for implementing goals related to the Declaration;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare an annual report and a comprehensive report every five years on progress achieved by the United Nations system and Member States towards implementing the Millennium Declaration, drawing upon the "road map" and in accordance with resolution 55/162, and requests that the annual reports focus on cross-cutting and cross-sectoral issues, as well as on the major areas set forth in the "road map", while the quinquennial comprehensive reports examine progress achieved towards implementing all the commitments made in the Declaration;

4. Invites the United Nations system, in cooperation with Member States, to adopt specific measures to give widespread publicity to the Millennium Declaration and to increase the dissemination of information on the Declaration;

5. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-seventh session the item entitled "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit". "

General Assembly Resolution 56/95

14 December 2001

http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/56/95&Lang=E

No UN resolution of 2001 mentioned the MDGs or the Annex containing the MDG framework.

The following statement published by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is correct that before 2005 the Assembly did not explicitly mention the MDGs. But its message that this happened in 2005 is complicated by the stand of the United States (see below) which continued until at least 2006.

"the United Nations General Assembly explicitly mentioned and endorsed the eight MDGs only as late as October 2005."

Claiming the Millennium Development Goals: A human rights approach
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations
New York and Geneva, 2008
ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Claiming_MDGs_en.pdf

The OHCHR document reads "October 2005" but seems to mean the Summit of September 2005.

The problem with its statement is this:

The day before leaders adopted their 2005 summit outcome document at the General Assembly, the United States claimed that the document's mention of "MDGs" would in fact refer to the Declaration's goals, not the Secretary-General's proposals of 2001 which the US said had never been agreed by member states.

The US position was that even in 2005, neither the US nor the Assembly was endorsing the MDG structure (with the 1990 baselines).

A previous statement of this US position was as follows:

"Our views on the sub-headings of the Development Chapter [of leaders' proposed September 2005 World Summit outcome document] are summarized below:

...the U.S. proposes using the phrase internationally agreed development goals rather than the term Millennium Development Goals in order to be clear that we are referring to goals agreed among governments --not the subsequent more elaborate framework of goals, targets and indicators prepared by the UN secretariat."

John R. Bolton

US Ambassador to the UN

30 August 2005

http://www.humanrightsvoices.org/assets/attachments/documents/bolton_development.pdf

The OHCHR text says, correctly:

"Until then [the Assembly] had focused (and still does) on calling for the implementation and monitoring of all goals and measures in the Millennium Declaration, which go beyond development."

Mr Manning had been correct in 2009: the Assembly in 2001 recommended the (58-page) Secretary-General's report, not the part containing the MDG framework.

"The results of this exercise, a framework containing 8 Goals, 18 Targets and 48 Indicators, were annexed to the Secretary-General's Road Map of 2001. This list became the authoritative statement of the MDG framework, despite the fact that, ironically, it was never endorsed as such by the General Assembly, not least because of both US and G77 reservations (from different perspectives) about aspects of Goal Eight. Instead the relevant resolution, though adopted without a vote, recommended that the Secretary-General's report 'Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration' be considered 'a useful guide' ..."

<http://www.oecd.org/site/progresskorea/44117550.pdf>

Mr Manning wrote in the 2009 article,

"The Millennium Declaration was not entirely clear about base year."

That is not true of the targets for child and maternal mortality, which used "current rates" as the baseline.

But in any case, the Declaration did not need to be "*clear about base year*" in the context.

Leaders at the Millennium Summit and in the subsequent debate were effusive about the Secretary-General's report, which had 2000 baselines, and sometimes referred to such baselines. The media reported as if the baselines were 2000. Nations went on to affirm baselines of 2000.

For more detail, see ungoals.org or millenniumdeclaration.org .

A week after welcoming the Road Map, member states again endorsed a 2000 baseline:

"The General Assembly...

Reaffirming the goal of reducing by half, between 2000 and 2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water..."

Resolution 56/192

21 December 2001

http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/56/192

<http://www.worldlii.org/int/other/UNGA/2001/301.pdf>

Three months later, they called for publicity for the Declaration, not the easier MDGs.

"We shall support the United Nations in the implementation of a global information campaign on the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. In that respect, we would like to encourage the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations and the private sector."

Final text of agreements and commitments adopted at the International Conference on Financing for Development

Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002

http://www.ycsg.yale.edu/assets/downloads/monterrey_consensus.pdf

A year after the Millennium Declaration, nations again agreed a 2000 baseline:

"We, the representatives of the peoples of the world...commit ourselves to...expedite... the... targets...reduce, by 2015, mortality rates...under 5 by two thirds, and maternal mortality rates by three quarters, of the prevailing rate in 2000... "

World Summit on Sustainable Development

4 September 2002

<http://www.un-documents.net/jburgdec.htm>

http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/WSSD_PlanImpl.pdf

Mr Manning was correct in his 2010 article in saying,

"...despite this less than robust formal basis, there can be no doubt that the MDGs have become highly influential at least at the level of international discourse about development."

Further analysis of statements about MDG endorsement is at:

<http://millenniumdeclaration.org/pledges.htm>

.....

Millennium Declaration, 8 September 2000:

*"We resolve...by the year 2015...
to have reduced maternal mortality by three-quarters, and
child mortality by two thirds,
of their current rates"*

[to about 3.6 million child deaths in 2015, or 10,000 deaths a day, not the 4.3 million a year implied by the easier MDG target proposed later]

<http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>

"the [2015 Summit] declaration needs to show the international community's resolve to fulfil the promise of the Millennium Declaration..."

Statement on behalf of the European Union

February 2015

http://eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_16119_en.htm

"Millennium Development Goals...eight global goals...agreed ...at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000. ...clear [!] and inspiring commitments...halving the number of people going hungry. The 2015 deadline for achieving these goals..."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/justine-greening-beyond-aid-development-priorities-from-2015>

The United States was clear in 2005 and 2006 that it had not agreed the MDG framework but was committed to the (2000-baseline) Declaration

"The...summit document expected to be adopted September 16 by the U.N. General Assembly clarifies that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are those agreed to by the United States and other U.N. members in the 2000 Millennium Declaration, says Assistant Secretary of State Kristen Silverberg. ...

Silverberg said the United States continues to "strongly support" the goals it agreed to in the Millennium Declaration, such as reducing world poverty by half by 2015...

"Sometimes people use [the term] MDGs to mean...a list...in a document the [U.N.] secretariat produced" following the Millennium Declaration, Silverberg said. The United States did not negotiate that document or agree to it and neither did many other states. It is solely a document of the secretariat, she said.

She said confusion about the U.S. stance on the MDGs was a result of erroneous reports presented by some media about the meaning of the term "Millennium Development Goals."

"The [world leaders'] outcome document clarifies the term MDGs, which means goals in the Millennium Declaration," she said."

16 September 2005

<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/article/2005/09/20050916110129akllennoccm0.3649256.html#ixzz3pPkGi19h>

<http://wfile.ait.org.tw/wf-archive/2005/050916/epf509.htm>

"The U.S. never signed onto it. Other member-states didn't sign onto it. So we try to be very precise when we're talking about the Millennium Declaration to say we support the goals in the Millennium Declaration that were subject to U.S. agreement."

Assistant US Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs

August 2005

2001-2009.state.gov/p/io/rls/rm/52382.htm

"Let there be no doubt: the United States supports the development goals of the Millennium Declaration. ...

The next year...the Secretariat formulated.... "Millennium Development Goals." They are solely a Secretariat product, which member states never formally adopted.

...UN member states have consistently agreed to use the formulation "internationally agreed development goals, including those in the Millennium Declaration" in negotiated texts. This spells out exactly what we are committed to...

...must not backtrack on previous agreements or create ambiguity...

...President Bush said..."America supports the international development goals in the UN Millennium Declaration."

We remain committed to work with member states in support of those goals."

John R. Bolton

US Ambassador to the UN

Letter to colleagues

26 August 2005

<https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/0826bolton.pdf>

http://www.humanrightsvoices.org/assets/attachments/documents/bolton_letter_mdgs.pdf

"THE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN THE MILLENNIUM DECLARATION ADOPTED BY UN

MEMBER STATES ARE...:

-- TO HALVE, BY THE YEAR 2015, THE PROPORTION OF THE WORLD'S PEOPLE WHOSE INCOME IS LESS THAN ONE DOLLAR A DAY AND THE PROPORTION OF PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM HUNGER AND, BY THE SAME DATE, TO HALVE THE PROPORTION OF PEOPLE WHO ARE UNABLE TO REACH OR TO AFFORD SAFE DRINKING WATER. ...

-- BY THE SAME DATE, TO HAVE REDUCED MATERNAL MORTALITY BY THREE QUARTERS, AND UNDER-FIVE CHILD MORTALITY BY TWO THIRDS, OF THEIR CURRENT RATES.

THE SECRETARIAT'S "MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS"...

...48 INDICATORS...

...THESE INDICATORS WERE NEVER SUBJECT TO INTER-GOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS...WE, THEREFORE, DO NOT WANT THEM PRESENTED AS BEING AGREED AMONG GOVERNMENTS.

.. RICE"

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS COLLECTIVE
ALSO FOR AID MISSIONS

US State Department

26 April 2005

pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pcaab560.pdf

2005 Summit outcome document:

"We, Heads of State and Government...reaffirm the Millennium Declaration...

We strongly reiterate our determination to ensure the timely and full realization of the development goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including those agreed at the Millennium Summit that are described as the Millennium Development Goals"

http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Attach/Indicators/ares60_1_2005summit_eng.pdf

Senator Sarbanes. When you first went up to the U.N., you sought to delete the references to the Millennium Development Goals from the outcome document, is that correct?

Ambassador Bolton. What I sought was to eliminate an ambiguity that had developed over the course of years about that term, which I'd be happy to explain here at greater length, if you'd like.

Senator Sarbanes. When the President went to speak at the U.N., he specifically endorsed the Millennium Development Goals, is that not right?

Ambassador Bolton. That's exactly right. And the ambiguity that we corrected, in fact, in the course of negotiating the outcome document, was as follows: The Millennium Development Goals, as they're frequently called, were originally written in the Millennium Declaration, which was the outcome document that came out of the 2000 Summit in New York. Those goals were endorsed by the United States and by all the member governments, and--that was during the Clinton administration--and were endorsed by the Bush administration shortly after it came into office, as well.

Subsequent to the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, the U.N. Development Program and other U.N. agencies took those goals and attempted to put them in quantifiable terms. Those efforts at quantification were not endorsed by all member governments, and specifically not by the United States. And yet, over time there developed an ambiguity as to what one meant when one used the phrase ``Millennium Development Goals.''

In the negotiation of the outcome document, we made several efforts to eliminate the ambiguity, and, ultimately, all of the member governments accepted a definition in the outcome document for ``Millennium Development Goals'' that said, ``These are the goals adopted in the Millennium Declaration of 2000.'' So, obviously, that was something we had accepted, and that President Bush had previously endorsed, even before his speech in New York last September."

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-109shrg36452/html/CHRG-109shrg36452.htm>

In 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 the UK recommitted, with other nations, to the 2000 baseline in the Millennium Declaration and/or other agreements

G8 agreement
July 2005, Gleneagles, Scotland

Signed by:
Presidents Bush, Putin, Chirac, Berlusconi;
Prime Ministers Koizumi, Blair, Martin;
Chancellor Schroeder; President of the European Commission Barroso

"We need to work with our partners to increase access to energy if we are to support the achievement of the goals agreed at the Millennium Summit in 2000."

"...the action needed for all developing countries to meet the Goals agreed at the Millennium Summit in 2000.

...Africa, which is the only continent not on track to meet any of the Goals of the Millennium Declaration by 2015. ...

The core aims for education and health are stated in the UN Millennium Declaration. We support our African partners' commitment...to reduce mortality ...particularly women and children; and so that ...people have access to safe water and sanitation. ...

A substantial increase in official development assistance, in addition to other resources, is required in order to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration (the Millennium Goals) by 2015, as we agreed at Monterrey in 2002. Fulfilling this commitment is needed in order to consolidate and build on recent progress in Africa..."

http://web.archive.org/web/20051027075956/http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/PostG8_Gleneagles_Communique,0.pdf

“We, the Heads of State and Government, or our Representatives and the Representative of the European Community... decide to: ...

...commit to take action towards sustainably eradicating hunger at the earliest possible date.

Ensure urgent national, regional and global action to fully realize the target of Millennium Development Goal and the 1996 World Food Summit goal, namely to reduce respectively the proportion and the number of people who suffer from hunger and malnutrition by half by 2015.”

World Summit on Food Security, Rome 16-18 November 2009: Declaration

<http://www.commit4africa.org/declarations/1631/millennium/0/0>

“We, the Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives... recommit to fully implement the internationally agreed commitments related to Africa's development needs, particularly those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration... ”

Future We Want

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Rio de Janeiro

22 June 2012

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/futurewewant.html>

“We, the Heads of State and Government and heads of delegation...reaffirm our commitment to the Millennium Declaration...and the outcomes of all the major UN conferences and summits in the economic, social, and environmental fields.”

UN Special Event Outcome Document

25 September 2013

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Outcome%20documentMDG.pdf>

“The Council adopted the following conclusions...

The EU and its Member States remain strongly committed to the Millennium Declaration, to accelerating efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to ensuring

that the post-2015 agenda provides a comprehensive follow-up to Rio+20 and addresses the structural causes of poverty, inequality..."

Council of the European Union

Council conclusions on a transformative post-2015 agenda

General Affairs Council meeting

Brussels

16 December 2014

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/146311.pdf

"The EU and its Member States remain strongly committed to the

[2000-baseline]

Millennium Declaration"

Statement on behalf of the European Union

Delegation of the European Union to the UN

United Nations General Assembly Plenary Meeting

8 January 2015

http://eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_15930_en.htm

"...shared responsibility, as already enshrined in the Millennium Declaration.

We need to recommit and build more clearly on the Millennium Declaration..."

European Union and its Member States

22 June 2015

http://eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_16598_en.htm

July 2015:

"We, the Heads of State and Government and High Representatives...reaffirm and build on the 2002 Monterrey Consensus"

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/313

2002 Monterrey Consensus:

"Upholding the Charter of the United Nations and building upon the values of the Millennium Declaration, we commit ourselves to promoting national and global economic systems based on the principles of justice, equity, democracy, participation, transparency, accountability and inclusion."

"...economic conditions needed to fulfil internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration...will be our first step to ensuring that the twenty-first century becomes the century of development for all."

"we should encourage...coordination....and coherence...to meet the Millennium Declaration development goals"

"We shall support ...a global information campaign on the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration."

http://www.ycsg.yale.edu/assets/downloads/monterrey_consensus.pdf

UK commitment to global food security

"World Food Summit Rome 2002 - Declaration of the World Food Summit: Five Years Later

...

You are viewing a filtered list of commitments ...

"Political will

1. We renew our global commitments made in the Rome Declaration at the World Food Summit in 1996 in particular to halve the number of hungry in the world no later than 2015, as reaffirmed in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

[Note by MB: The last part is not correct. The Millennium Declaration is in fact refers to halving the "proportion" which is an easier target. Nevertheless, governments did recommit to the harder target in 2002.]

We resolve to accelerate the implementation of the WFS Plan of Action."

Transparency for Accountability

<http://www.commit4africa.org/declarations/485/millennium/0/0>

"Dozens of heads of government from Africa, Asia and Latin America came to what was billed as an effort to halve the number of hungry people, from more than 800 million to 400 million ...

The summit was called to generate money and momentum for a flagging effort, launched at a similar gathering in 1996, to halve the number of hungry people by 2015. Those who did come to Rome yesterday admitted that, six years on, little progress had been made.

The UN secretary general, Kofi Annan, said 24,000 people died each day from hunger. "In a world of plenty, ending hunger is within our grasp. Failure to reach this goal should fill every one of us with shame. The time for making promises is over. It is time to act."

Western leaders snub UN food summit

UK sends lowest-ranking delegation to event...

Tuesday 11 June 2002 16.05 BST Last modified on Thursday 13 June 2002 16.05 BST

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/jun/11/famine.rorycarroll>

Secretary of State misleads on humans' access to clean water

"Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation"

<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Indicators/OfficialList.htm>

"While it was encouraging that the Millennium Development Goal target [?] on drinking water was met [?] in 2010 [?], over 760 million people do not have access to clean [?] water..."

Justine Greening"

Undated

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/382138/Water-Aid-World-Toilet-Day.pdf

First, strictly speaking there is no *"target on drinking water"*. No-one is claiming that Target 7c is "met".

Second, there are no official estimates of progress on "clean" water. The UK Government's usual practice is to cite UN statistics, which in this case are on "improved sources", not cleanliness (see below). As the official monitors make clear, the category of "improved sources" does not mean "clean". 760 million seems a wild understatement for those lacking clean water, if the official monitors' publications are to be believed.

Third, the "target" is on sustainable access.

Fourth, even if the "target" had been on "improved sources", it still would not have been *"met in 2010"* according to the official figures, if we give credence to the following: According to an official report from the MDG negotiator for the OECD, the MDG aim agreed in 2001 had a 2000 baseline, not a 1990 baseline.

Contrary to a widely held belief, the Millennium Development Goal "target" does not mention the easier 1990 baseline required for the UK Government's claim - even though other targets with 1990 baselines do mention them.

Even if we ignore the problems that:

- water cleanliness is not generally estimated,
- the "target" is on sustainable access,

and

- it is not really a "target" because the MDG target includes sanitation which is doing much worse,

the official figures would still not support the idea that the MDG water "target" as it seems to have been agreed in 2001 was met - in 2010 or even 2015.

"The Department for International Development's top civil servant" made a false claim on "clean" water in 2012.

"In the mid-1990s...I was periodically tasked with writing briefing papers for...the Permanent Secretary, for meetings...in the [OECD](#)....These meetings ultimately led to the agreement of the International Development Targets. The IDTs then became one of the key building blocks for the [Millennium Development Goals](#).

When they were first proposed in the 1990s, the MDGs....sceptics have been confounded. The halving poverty target was achieved 5 years early.The clean water target was also met 5 years early."

"The MDGs have provided a powerful focus for shared international action for the last 15 years."

Mark Lowcock, "The Department for International Development's top civil servant"

The future of international development

16 October 2012

"Transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered"

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/mark-lowcock-the-future-of-international-development>

.....

The UN Statistics Division states that data on safety are lacking, and sustainability is "not measured".

So we do not know whether the drinking water part was met.

The Secretary of State's reference to "over 760 million" lacking "clean" water also seems misleading, since UNICEF and WHO stated in 2011,

"At the current rate of progress, 672 million people will not use improved drinking water sources in 2015. It is likely that many hundreds of millions more will still lack sustainable access to safe drinking water"

UNICEF/WHO 2011

www.wssinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/resources/report_wash_low.pdf

In 2014 the official monitors estimated that 1800 million had unclean water:

"A new report (pdf) from World Health Organisation and Unicef says that 1.8bn people are estimated to use a source of drinking water that is contaminated with faeces."

2014

Over 1bn people drink water contaminated by faeces

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2014/sep/02/sanitation-contamination-world-water-week>

It was known at least as far back as 2005 that the "improved" sources were not evidence of safety:

"...there is no evidence that the so-called "improved" technologies do provide safe water or adequate sanitation.

Moreover, the concept of safety and reliability of water sources and of adequacy of sanitation facilities from a user's point of view, key to any analysis of the status of the water supply and sanitation sector, have until now been overlooked in the monitoring process. In some locations, for instance, an unprotected household well may provide a better supply of water,

both in terms of quantity and quality of water, than a household connection that may be subject to intermittence and poor water quality. The concept of sustainability (both in terms of service and environment), present in the Target 10 definition, is not addressed by indicators 30 and 31. Finally, affordability is only implied, but not clearly stated."

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
Conference of EECCA Ministers of Economy/Finance, Environment and Water and their partners from the OECD
17-18 November 2005, Yerevan, Armenia
<http://www.oecd.org/environment/outreach/35372500.pdf>

The official UN Statistics Division notes on the MDG target:

"COMMENTS AND LIMITATIONS

Given the lack of nationally representative data on drinking water quality and safety and the high costs and technical difficulties of collecting such information at a large scale, the Inter-agency Expert Group on MDG Indicators endorses the use of this indicator on the use of an improved drinking water source as a proxy for access to safe drinking water.

The proxy indicator does not reflect the time spent on getting water from improved sources not on premises. Sustainable access is currently not measured for reasons of a lack of common understanding of what constitutes sustainable access and how to reliably measure it."

<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mi/wiki/7-8-Proportion-of-population-using-an-improved-drinking-water-source.ashx>

"While target 7.C explicitly refers to access to safe drinking water, the indicator does not measure quality directly, and the assumption that improved sources are more likely to provide safe water than unimproved sources is misleading."

Human Rights and MDGs in Practice:
A review of country strategies and reporting
United Nations

2010

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HRAndMDGsInPractice.pdf>

Newspaper report:

"The JMP [official monitors] also tempered any celebrations with a warning that the data collected only measured access to improved water sources – those that adequately protect the source from outside contamination – rather than assessed the quality, or reliability of the water supply, or whether water sources were sustainable.

Testing the quality of the water at a national level in all countries was too expensive and logistically difficult, said the report. "As a result, it is likely that the number of people using safe water supplies has been overestimated."

The target for sanitation is one of the MDGs that is most off-track. Globally, it is predicted that the target will not be reached until 2026."

Millennium development goal on safe drinking water reaches target early

6 March 2012

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/mar/06/water-millennium-development-goals>

BBC fact-checkers reported the fact that the statistics are not on "safe" water, but made their own error:

The facts that the water "target" is in fact not a whole target, and that the data are not on "safe" water, were covered in the BBC radio programme More or Less on 10 March 2012.

The programme quoted the MDG target correctly. However, immediately afterwards it made the claim, perhaps because of a herd instinct, that the target had a 1990 baseline. The programme also wrongly claimed, perhaps for a similar reason, that this easier target had been agreed at the UN in 2000.

http://aod-pod-uk-live.edgesuite.net/mpg_mp3_med/podcast_migrated/p02rzhdh-moreorless_20120309-2350a.mp3

From unanswered complaint to the BBC, 6 February 2014,
in invited comments on Editorial Complaints Unit provisional response 1300394:

"More or Less of 10 March 2012...[stated:]

"...the Millennium Development Goals were agreed by all the countries of the United Nations and the big aid agencies in the year 2000."

More or Less makes a major error. The MDG targets ...are in fact easier than the pledges in the Millennium Declaration of 2000. The latter is a UN General Assembly resolution. A major difference is that the resolution's pledges were not backdated, and are therefore to, for example halve the proportion of people in 2000 on under "\$1 ", not the 1990 level."....

[The programme contradicted itself by saying it had scrutinised the goal while confusing it with the more ambitious UN pledge.] "

[End of initial complaint to BBC on baseline. At that time the author did not know of the OECD document of 2001 stating that the MDG target had a baseline of 2000, and did not take in that the absence of the 1990 baseline in the MDG list was significant.]

The BBC fact-checking programme wrongly said that the UN agreed the 1990 baseline in 2000, and seems to have wrongly claimed the MDG target has a 1990 baseline.

"the Millennium Development Goals were agreed by all the countries of the United Nations and the big aid agencies in the year 2000 [!] ...

*...So the whole [water] goal's about halving the proportion.... between 1990 [!] and 2015."
"we scrutinised [!] the goal of halving the proportion of those living on less than a dollar a day in our last edition"*

More or Less, BBC World Service
10 March 2012

http://aod-pod-uk-live.edgesuite.net/mpg_mp3_med/podcast_migrated/p02rzhdh-moreorless_20120309-2350a.mp3

After this complaint, and many others like it to the BBC, More or Less broadcast 3 July 2015 claimed the MDGs were agreed "*around 2000*". Its programme page has a clearer error.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02vmb62>

Why is there no "1990" baseline mentioned in the MDG water and sanitation target?

Following agreement between civil servants from the UN, World Bank, IMF and OECD, the UN Secretary-General proposed the MDG water and sanitation target as follows, using the first formulation and numbering scheme:

"Target 10. Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water"

Report of the Secretary-General: Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration

6 September 2001

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/sgreport2001.pdf>

It was unusual among MDG "halving" targets in not specifying a 1990 baseline. It was subsequently taken by many to mean 1990 without saying it.

But why did it, unusually, omit the baseline?

After the Secretary-General proposed the MDG structure, the OECD Secretariat told members of its Development Assistance Committee - the world's main group of donor countries, which had in 1996 devised the 1990-baseline predecessors to the MDGs - that civil servants from the UN, IMF, OECD and World Bank had agreed a 2000 baseline for the water target.

The contact name given was Brian Hammond, head of development statistics at the OECD in Paris and one of the two "money men" at the MDG negotiations - the other being from the World Bank.

On 9 April 2001 the present author expressed concern to Mr Hammond at the fact that internationally agreed goals would be reached faster if the poorest died earlier, as he had done to other senior figures in international development.

<http://www.mattberkley.com/morduch.htm>

On 11 April 2001 a similar discussion occurred with Eric Swanson of the World Bank, the other representative of financing among the "MDG architects".

<http://www.mattberkley.com/survival.htm>

Incredibly, poverty experts, economic theorists and statisticians had failed to take the number of survivors into account when claiming to aggregate outcomes for the poorest.

"DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

(Note by the Secretariat)

17 September 2001

This information note charts the progress, since Members of the DAC last received an update in April 2001, on aligning the International Development Goals (IDGs) with the targets in the Millennium Declaration. ...

Staff from the Secretariats of the UN (Secretary General's Office and UNDG), IMF, OECD-DAC, and the World Bank met in New York on 21 June 2001 to discuss aligning the goals. In subsequent correspondence they reached agreement on a presentation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)...

It was agreed that there should be a standard baseline year of 1990 against which to measure progress (with an exception of using 2000 for the safe water goal as that was agreed in a recent UN conference)."

http://www.mofat.go.kr/webmodule/common/download.jsp?boardid=106&tablename=TYPE_DATABOARD&seqno=075ffcfdafa0fa2ff1fd103b&fileseq=05b06bfb1fd504dfa303b07b

The above document may need the extension .pdf to be added.

It is also available at:

<http://millenniumdeclaration.org/mdgwaterbaseline.pdf> .

"What is the DAC?"

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is the leading international forum for bilateral providers of development co-operation. Its main objective is to promote development co-operation and other policies so as to contribute to sustainable development. The Committee monitors development finance flows, reviews and provides guidance on development co-operation policies, promotes sharing of good practices and helps shape the global development architecture. The DAC has developed a reputation for objectivity, neutrality and quality of its work.

Since its establishment in 1961, the DAC has taken key decisions on and set standards for development co-operation. The DAC defines official development assistance (ODA) and periodically updates the list of ODA recipients. It has set standards on the financial terms and conditions of aid ...

.... In 1996, the DAC formulated the International Development Goals, which evolved into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Committee has also promoted dialogue on how to make evaluation of aid more effective, which led to the creation of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation.

As a standard setter and watchdog of development co-operation, the DAC remains relevant, not only for its members but also to the development community more generally."

Joining the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/joining-the-development-assistance-committee.htm#What>

An OECD report from 2005 mentioned the baseline question and in effect noted that the differences in targets would amount to:

Water target for 2015: Below 11.5 instead of 9 per cent without "access"

Sanitation target for 2015: Below 22.5 instead of 19 per cent without "access".

"Baseline date

The definition of Target 10 does not explicitly provide for a baseline date against which progress should be monitored. Although the MDGs were formulated in 2000 [!], and in spite

of the initial statement of UN Secretary General ("Halve, by 2015, ... " ...), the baseline for the MDG target on water and sanitation, and for most MDG targets in general, has been set as 1990 22.

According to the French Water Academy, who used 2000 as baseline year in its March 2004 report 23, selecting 1990 as the baseline year is not, as could be thought, neutral and less demanding:

[perhaps the writers mean "but is less demanding"]
in fact it results in a decrease of the target for access to water at global level from 91 per cent to 89.5 per cent in 2015 and of the target for access to sanitation from 81 per cent to 77.5 per cent. ...

22 JMP report, "Meeting the MDG drinking water and sanitation target – A mid-term assessment of progress", 2004.

23 Water Academy 2004, "The cost of meeting the Johannesburg targets for drinking water", by Henri Smets. "

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
Conference of EECCA Ministers of Economy/Finance, Environment and Water and their partners from the OECD
17-18 November 2005, Yerevan, Armenia
<http://www.oecd.org/environment/outreach/35372500.pdf>

In the UNICEF/WHO database, the estimates for proportions of people without "improved sources" of water are:

1990: 23.6%;
2000: 17.5%;
2015: 9.1%.

There was therefore not an official "halving" between 2000 and 2010 - or even between 2000 and 2015 - of the proportion without so-called "improved sources".

Data from:

<http://www.wssinfo.org/data-estimates/tables/>

Figures are from the last three lines, third column of data for each of water and sanitation statistics..

The figures I give above are the result of subtracting the table's claimed proportions of people who do have access from 100%, to give proportions of people claimed as lacking access.

Secretary of State appears to imply exaggeration of UN reports of progress on child and maternal mortality

The UN claims that child mortality rates were 90 per 1000 live births in 1990, 76 in 2000 and 45 in 2013. The number of births globally has not varied greatly.

It claims that maternal mortality rates were, per 100,000 births: 380 in 1990, 330 in 2000 and 210 in 2013.

mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Products/Progress2015/Statannex.pdf

"Despite population growth in the developing regions, the number of deaths of children under five has declined from 12.7 million in 1990 to almost 6 million in 2015 globally."

"Since 1990, the maternal mortality ratio has declined by 45 per cent worldwide,"

UN MDG Report 2015, pages 5-6.

UK Secretary of State for International Development:

"The world has made enormous progress in the battle against poverty since the MDGs were agreed. Together we have helped halve extreme poverty, we've cut under 5 child deaths from nearly 35,000 per day to around 17,000. We've cut maternal deaths by nearly half."

Changing world, changing aid: Where international development needs to go next
Speech by the International Development Secretary at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in London

3 July 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/changing-world-changing-aid-where-international-development-needs-to-go-next>

Does she mean these halvings are since 2000, "when the MDGs were agreed" - the latter not being true?

Or 2001, when the UN General Assembly did not mention the MDGs but on 21 December reaffirmed the Declaration's 2000-baseline promises?

Or does she mean 2005, when the US said that world leaders' mention of MDGs in that year's Summit document would be to the (2000-baseline) Declaration goals and not the MDG (1990-baseline) framework proposed by UN civil servants?

Or does she mean some other year when the MDG targets were "agreed"? UN member states do seem to have committed themselves to the MDGs in 2010.

Is she referring by "MDGs" to the fact that most of the undated Goals such as "reduce child mortality" were agreed in essence by world leaders at the 2000 Summit?

Would people not reasonably assume she meant the targets with 1990 baselines?

Is the Secretary of State not referring in fact to official claims with a baseline of 1990, nowhere near the time the MDG targets may have been agreed?

Is the passage not misleading overall?

Her claim of a 50% cut in child deaths:

"since the MDGs were agreed....we've cut under 5 child deaths from nearly 35,000 per day to around 17,000 "

conflicts with the claim of "more than 30%" here:

"child death rates have fallen by more than 30%, with about three million children's lives saved each year compared to 2000."

[British High Commission Singapore](#)

20 January 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/2015-a-defining-moment-for-sustainable-development-speech>

Ms Greening continued:

"DFID - and many of the organisations in this room - have played their part in these achievements and we should all be immensely proud of that.

And of course, we now live in a very different world now to 2000 when the MDGs were first agreed."

David Cameron misleads in his UN speech that easier 1990-baseline MDG targets are the Millennium pledges

"Since the MDGs were adopted in the year 2000"

Prime Minister

Speech to the Sustainable Development Goals Summit

United Nations General Assembly, New York

27 September 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-to-the-un-sustainable-development-goals-summit-2015>

The phrase "Millennium Development Goals" and the acronym "MDGs" were not used in 2000. The natural meaning is that the Prime Minister meant the commitments by world leaders in 2000. It is not clear what other event he might be referring to.

Many citizens would thus take the Prime Minister to be saying that leaders committed themselves to the easier 1990 baselines.

The Prime Minister said in the same speech:

"Let's be frank about what keeps so many stuck in poverty.

Corruption. Rotten government. No access to justice. No property rights. No rule of law.

Today, for the first time, every country in the world is committing to tackle corruption, to promote the rule of law and access to justice, to reduce illicit financial flows and to strengthen the return of stolen assets.

We are committing to build accountable and transparent institutions and representative decision making to ensure everyone has ...access to information ...

For a long time, these issues were off the global agenda. Now they are at the top of it. And everyone has signed up."

Secretary of State misleads several times that the 1990-baseline MDG targets are what leaders agreed in 2000

"a very different world now to 2000 when the MDGs were first agreed."

3 July 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/changing-world-changing-aid-where-international-development-needs-to-go-next>

"the world agreed the Millennium Development Goals back in 2000."

10 March 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/uk-aid-in-2015-the-progress-so-far-and-the-priorities-ahead>

"The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of 8 poverty targets set by the UN in 2000"

Press release

From: Department for International Development and The Rt Hon Justine Greening MP

7 July 2014

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/greening-new-poverty-goals-must-focus-on-peace-jobs-and-justice>

"2000 when the current set of Millennium Development Goals were formulated."

23 October 2012

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/justine-greening-bonds-annual-general-meeting>

"Millennium Development Goals...eight global goals to fight poverty...agreed by countries and leading development institutions at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000.

These goals have played a critical role in the fight against poverty...really galvanising the international community around some clear and inspiring commitments...halving the number of people going hungry.

[The last is not in the MDGs or the Declaration, both of which refer to the easier target - if there were reliable and meaningful statistics - of halving the "proportion". It was a commitment, though from a 1996 baseline.]

The 2015 deadline for achieving these goals..."

Speech by the International Development Secretary at Standard Chartered in London on the focus of the UN's new poverty goals, due to be launched in 2015.

7 July 2014 (Transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered)

Part of: [Overseas aid transparency](#)

and [Overseas aid effectiveness](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/justine-greening-beyond-aid-development-priorities-from-2015>

"Almost 15 years ago, the international community came together to agree some simple, powerful objectives. No one should live on under \$1.25 a day. Denying girls an education isn't acceptable. The terrible scale of deaths from malaria and HIV/AIDS must be addressed. These were things we could agree to tackle together, and the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were born.

These goals drove more than a decade of remarkable progress. Today the international community faces a renewed test. 2015 is the end date for the MDGs, by which time we will judge huge progress on the commitments we made in the Millennium Declaration."

Justine Greening

Secretary of State for International Development

2013

<http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8732.pdf>

Other UK Government output misleading that in 2000, world leaders agreed the easier MDG targets

"29 March 2016

...In 2000, the United Nations hosted a Millennium Summit with the aim of defining a blueprint for action, agreed by all the world's countries and leading development institutions, ,, This summit culminated in the creation of eight development goals with targets designed to support action from 'halving extreme poverty' to 'halting the spread of HIV/ AIDS', with the end date of 2015.

While the Millennium Development Goals are acknowledged to have made huge positive strides..."

Working together for a resilient future - Barometer Magazine

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/barometer/features/2016-03/working-together-for-a-resilient-future>

"On 25 September 2015, 193 world leaders will adopt 17 Global Goals to end extreme poverty and to build a better world by 2030.

These new goals build on the progress of the Millennium Development Goals set in 2000"

"In 2000, world leaders agreed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to eradicate poverty and hunger."

"Aid alone will not eradicate poverty. The UK will work with new economic powers to boost the volume, transparency and effectiveness of their development programmes"

United Nations General Assembly 2015 and the Global Goals

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/united-nations-general-assembly-2015/about>

"The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000 and nearly 190 countries have subsequently signed up to them. ...

Alongside the Goals, a series of 18 targets was also drawn up to give the international community a number of tangible improvements to aim for within a fixed period of time, and also make it easier for them to measure their progress to date.

The intention is that almost all of these targets will be achieved by 2015. "

<http://www.dfid.org/mdg/index.html>

Text as of 27 June 2015

Last updated: 01 August 2007

"Since 2000... the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have enabled agencies and donors to share common high-level objectives"

How DFID works with multilateral agencies to achieve impact

Report 44 – June 2015

<http://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/ICAI-Report-How-DFID-works-with-multilateral-agencies-to-achieve-impact.pdf>

"In 2000 the Millennium Development Goals were created by the UN"

From: [British High Commission Singapore](#)

First published: 20 January 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/2015-a-defining-moment-for-sustainable-development-speech>

"The MDGs are the blueprint agreed in 2000 by governments and international development organisations for meeting the needs of the world's poorest people by 2015."

1 February 2013

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/liberia-pm-chairs-development-meeting>

"The global development landscape has evolved significantly since the MDGs were agreed in 2000"

Post 2015 Development Goals

14th November 2012

Submission by UK Department for International Development to International Development Select Committee of the House of Commons

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmintdev/writev/post2015/m79.htm>

"We have committed to reducing maternal mortality, improving maternal health and combating HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases in developing countries as part of the Millennium Development Goals, a series of targets agreed at the UN in 2000."

"3 of these goals are about improving health by 2015."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-health-in-developing-countries>

"We have committed to providing clean water and sanitation in developing countries as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a series of targets agreed at the UN in 2000."

Updated 8 May 2015

2010 to 2015 government policy: water and sanitation in developing countries

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-water-and-sanitation-in-developing-countries>

"Since their launch in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals...

How will our entry be judged?

Presentations will be judged on the following criteria:

1. Knowledge of the current MDGs...

...3. Use of relevant evidence and research

4. A demonstration of critical thinking (questioning evidence, drawing on a wide range of views, thinking laterally about the purpose of goals) ...

What do I need to know about the Millennium Development Goals?

History of the Millennium Development Goals

In September 2000, world leaders from 189 countries met at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, where they committed to the Millennium Development Goals "

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/377675/Resource-Pack-Booklet_1_.pdf

"[Foreign Minister Julie Bishop delivered the 2014 Magna Carta Lecture]...

...forged the MDGs in the year 2000

[!]

...some nations will not meet one of their Millennium Development Goals by 2015"

1 May 2014

<https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/transcript-magna-carta-lecture-2014>

"The British High Commission and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) in Pakistan launched a painting and a writing competition titled 'Shape the Future' at the SoS school in Rawalpindi today.

Shape the Future

The competition invites students from across Pakistan to share their recommendations – in the form of paintings and pieces of creative writing – on what they think would help improve people's lives in Pakistan and put the country on the path to sustainable progress. Since their launch in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals have encouraged countries to work towards meeting the needs of the world's poorest people by 2015. We want to help Pakistan's young people contribute to the international debate [!] that is shaping the new, post-2015 development goals."

British High Commission launches 'Shape the Future' competition - News articles

<https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/british-high-commission-launches-shape-the-future-competition>

UK calls for more "accountability" at same time as helping to give the public an understated impression of its Millennium commitments

"The Prime Minister will open the event, set out the promise that the world needs to keep to ensure no one is left behind and announce that the UK will join up with other supporting organisations behind Richard Curtis' Project Everyone to ensure a global moment each year to celebrate the 17 Global Goals and shine a spotlight on performance and progress. "

PM calls on world leaders for more aid spending and more accountability - Press releases - GOV.UK

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-calls-on-world-leaders-for-more-aid-spending-and-more-accountability>

Richard Curtis' Project Everyone, despite being told before the 2015 Summit of its error in confusing the Millennium pledges with the easier MDG targets, went ahead in misleading the public again, including in the worldwide Global Citizen Festival broadcast in which it also made a strange claim about how many people had gained access to safe water.

The broadcast claimed that the MDGs were "issued" in 2000 and that

"over 2 billion more got clean drinking water".

The information about the date of the MDGs was in spite of the speech by an announcer on the stage:

"Knowledge is power...up to us to make sure [promises] are kept...can't fight for your rights if you don't know what they are...we need/to tell everyone...about the goals...let's do our job".

A recent piece of output from Global Citizen claims,

"780 million people do not have regular access to clean water."

23 May 2016

<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/water-and-sanitation-explainer/>

Another example is:

"In 2010, the world met the United Nations' Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water. This was 5 years ahead of schedule."

17 September 2015

<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/global-goal-6-clean-water-sanitation/>

Independent Commission on Aid Impact misleads on Millennium pledges' baseline

I see no evidence that ICAI has ever mentioned the UK Government's actual commitments of 2000, even though they were reaffirmed by EU member states in 2015.

I do find this:

"Since 2000 [!] the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have enabled agencies and donors to share common high-level objectives"

How DFID works with multilateral agencies to achieve impact

Report 44 – June 2015

<http://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/ICAI-Report-How-DFID-works-with-multilateral-agencies-to-achieve-impact.pdf>

The wrong date contributes to the false impression that leaders only agreed the easier 2000-baseline targets.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office misleads on Millennium pledges' baseline

"the Millennium Development Goals, which were adopted [!] in 2000 [!] and expire at the end of this year."

Historic global agreement on sustainable development

Foreign Office Blogs

[Emily Byrne](#)

Senior Policy Adviser on Climate, Energy and Political issues

2 October 2015

<http://blogs.fco.gov.uk/emilybyrne/2015/10/02/historic-global-agreement-on-sustainable-development/>

"the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set in 2000." [!]

"Both the UK and Brunei were strong supporters of the MDGs which have helped to halve poverty and improve living standards around the world over the past 15 years." [!]

Global Goals for a better world

Foreign Office Blogs

25 September 2015

<http://blogs.fco.gov.uk/davidcampbell/2015/09/25/global-goals-for-a-better-world/>

DFID blogs contribute to understated impression of Millennium pledges

Head of DFID Tanzania

"When the Millennium Declaration – which encapsulated the current set of Millennium Development Goals – was signed on 8 September 2000"

The Power of Young People #YouthSummit | DFID bloggers

<https://dfid.blog.gov.uk/2015/09/11/the-power-of-young-people-youthsummit/>

"Back in 2000 the UN's Millennium Development Goals set out how they were going to change the world to meet the needs of the poorest over the next 15 years. "

<https://dfid.blog.gov.uk/2013/12/02/disability-in-uganda/>

DFID glossary's false claim that world leaders in 2000 set the easier MDG targets

"Millennium Development Goals

A set of eight international development goals for 2015, adopted by the international community in the UN Millennium Declaration in September 2000.."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/glossary-of-terms-used-by-the-department-for-international-development/glossary-of-terms-used-by-the-department-for-international-development#m>

"Glossary/Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

A set of 8 international development goals for 2015, adopted by the international community in the UN Millennium Declaration in September 2000"

UK Department for International Development: Annual Report and Accounts 2012–13

UK Government renews "promises to the world's poor" which it itself obscured

"Development spending will meet UK's promises to world's poor while serving national interest"

HM Treasury,
Department for International Development,
The Rt Hon Justine Greening MP and
The Rt Hon George Osborne MP

First published:
23 November 2015

Part of:
Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/development-spending-will-meet-uks-promises-to-worlds-poor-while-serving-national-interest>

UK Government appears to have breached its own transparency and accountability commitments

"Published 16 July 2015

...DFID commitment...

DFID will tackle the underlying causes of poverty by supporting strong and inclusive economic, social and political institutions and empowered citizens. ...By supporting more governments to put effective, accountable governance and security institutions in place, we can help them meet their people's needs."

DFID Annual Report and Accounts 2014-15 Results achieved by sector:

Governance and security

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-annual-report-and-accounts-2014-15-results-achieved-by-sector-governance-and-security/dfid-annual-report-and-accounts-2014-15-results-achieved-by-sector-governance-and-security>

Further/longer extracts:

"DFID will tackle the underlying causes of poverty by supporting strong and inclusive economic, social and political institutions and empowered citizens. ...

By supporting more governments to put effective, accountable governance and security institutions in place, we can help them meet their people's needs. In the long term this means we are spending now to save later, as countries reach a point where they can stand on their own two feet. The importance of governance and security is recognised in the Millennium Declaration (September 2000):

We will spare no effort to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development.

1. DFID commitment

The results commitments relating to this sector were announced in the publication UK aid: Changing lives, delivering results and are as follows.

...

we will support 40 million people to hold authorities to account

2. Indicators used to measure progress...

...number of people supported to have choice and control over their own development and to hold decision makers to account.

3. Results achieved

By 2014-15 DFID had achieved the following results:...

supported 101.6 million people to have choice and control over their own development and to hold decision makers to account.

There are 48 projects which support people to have choice and control over their own development and to hold decision makers to account. The support varies by context and includes building awareness among citizens on the services they should be able to expect from their governments... "

DFID Annual Report and Accounts 2014-15

Results achieved by sector:

Governance and security

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-annual-report-and-accounts-2014-15-results-achieved-by-sector-governance-and-security/dfid-annual-report-and-accounts-2014-15-results-achieved-by-sector-governance-and-security>

"DFID continues to work alongside Omidyar Network on a range of global transparency initiatives...in particular exploiting the power of Open Data to shine a spotlight on the facts that bring power closer to the people. ...

Millennium Development Goals...eight global goals to fight poverty...agreed by countries and leading development institutions at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000.

[!]

These goals have played a critical role ...clear and inspiring commitments...halving the number of people going hungry.

The 2015 deadline for achieving these goals....

Part of:

Making UK aid more open and transparent..."

[!]

7 July 2014

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/justine-greening-beyond-aid-development-priorities-from-2015>

"Millennium Development Goals...eight global goals to fight poverty...agreed by countries and leading development institutions at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000. ... galvanising the international community around some clear and inspiring commitments "

Speech by the International Development Secretary at Standard Chartered in London on the focus of the UN's new poverty goals, due to be launched in 2015.

7 July 2014 (Transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered)

Part of: [Overseas aid transparency](#)

and [Overseas aid effectiveness](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/justine-greening-beyond-aid-development-priorities-from-2015>

"Post-2015 Millennium Development Goals

...To ask Her Majesty's Government what are their priorities for the United Nations General Assembly's open working group on sustainable development goals.[HL5343]

Baroness Northover: ...The agenda should...promote the prerequisites for people to escape poverty (... transparency and accountability...)"

Lords Hansard text for 25 Feb 2013 (pt 0003)

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/130225w0003.htm>

"the UK will continue to drive a transparency revolution in every corner of the world through our leadership of the Open Government Partnership."

15 June 2013

(Original script, may differ from delivered version)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-speech-at-g8-open-for-growth>

"I passionately believe that the new goals need to be simple, inspiring and relevant"

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/i-passionately-believe-that-the-new-goals-need-to-be-simple-inspiring-and-relevant>

"UK Prime Minister David Cameron's Remarks to the Transparency International Post 2015 High-Level event"

Previous explicitly false or misleading statements by UK Government on international commitments on poverty and development

The "International Development Goals" or "International Development Targets" proposed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in 1996 had baselines of 1990.

On September 8 2000, the UK Prime Minister agreed the Millennium Declaration, which has a more ambitious 2000 baseline.

On September 26 2000, according to the then UK Secretary of State for International Development and Britain's Governor of the World Bank, she said:

"...the international development targets...aim to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015 - which means a billion people being lifted out of poverty between 1990-2015. ...The UN and all its members...are now all firmly committed to the targets" [!]

<http://www.clareshort.co.uk/speeches/DFID/DFID%20Speech%20Sept%202000.pdf>

The White Paper of December 2000 mentions a "commitment" to goals with easier 1990 baselines, rather than what Mr Blair had agreed three months before at the historic Summit. The statement "many of the targets...were...endorsed by 149 Heads of State" seems clearly misleading.

"In this Paper we strongly reaffirm the UK Government's commitment to the International Development Targets set out in our first White Paper."

"They remain absolutely central to our development strategy...[?]"

Most recently, many of the targets were also endorsed by 149 Heads of State at the UN Millennium Summit in New York."

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/whitepaper2000.pdf>

The paper says it was "Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for International Development by Command of Her Majesty".

Is the document saying the Queen commanded Clare Short to present to Parliament commitments to easier targets than those Mr Blair had just agreed?

Or did the Head of State not know what her country was committed to?

"The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations marked an explicit world-wide agreement that extreme poverty must be halved from 1990 levels by 2015"

Departmental Report 2001

Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for International Development and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury by Command of Her Majesty

March 2001

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/250888/5111.pdf

"UN Millennium Declaration

Malcolm Bruce: to meet the commitments of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

Clare Short: The Millennium Declaration endorsed the Millennium Development Goals, a set of 2015 targets for poverty reduction. We worked hard to get UN agreement to these goals and all of the work of my Department is aimed at reaching these Goals. The Millennium Declaration also called on ... effective pro-poor policies. ...

My Department will continue to focus its efforts on achieving the Goals set out in the Millennium Declaration. Details of how we have contributed during 2001–02 to achieving the Millennium Development Goals will be published next month in our Departmental Report."

House of Commons Hansard Written Answers for 26 Mar 2002

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmhansrd/vo020326/text/20326w12.htm>

"The Minister of State, Department for International Development (Hilary Benn) : ...For the first time, we have a clear international consensus on what we want to achieve in the form of the millennium development goals, which were agreed at the millennium summit in 2000."

House of Commons Hansard Debates for 17 Jul 2003 (pt 2)

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/vo030717/halltext/30717h02.htm>

"The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed at the United Nations Millennium Summit of September 2000. The aim was to set specific targets for reducing poverty and improving the lives of the poorest people in the world."

"Millennium Development Goals

A set of eight international development goals for 2015, adopted by the international community in the UN Millennium Declaration in September 2000...

The UK's Contribution to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals

Her Majesty's Government

2005

[webarhive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/%2B/http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/uk-cont-mdg-report.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/uk-cont-mdg-report.pdf)

"The MDGs were agreed at the UN in 2000. [!]

These eight goals have guided international development ever since. Having set the standard, the UN is helping hold countries to account for progress.

In 2005 at the UN summit, world leaders re-committed themselves to achieve the MDGs by 2015."

UK Department for International Development White Paper

2006

"Gordon Brown has expressed "anger" at the failure of rich nations to honour pledges to combat global poverty. The United Nations' eight Millennium Development Goals were set out in 2000 with the aim of being reached by 2015. ...

"I'm angry because we made commitments that we would meet these Millennium Development Goals," [!] he told the BBC....

"I think rich countries have not done enough to honour the promises that we made." ...

Mr Brown, who was UK chancellor at the time the pledges were made, said the governments of wealthy nations needed to face continuing public pressure to ensure they stuck to their pledges...

Target:...between 1990 and 2015...

Target:...between 1990 and 2015."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11378604>

21 September 2010

Date not clear:

"What is "development"

and what is the UK doing to promote it?

...2. A person is considered poor if their income or consumption level falls below a minimum level necessary to meet basic needs. Poverty lines across countries vary, but for the purposes of global aggregation and comparison the World Bank puts the international 'extreme' poverty line at US\$1.25 a day 2

... One billion people live in extreme poverty...

Agreed by 147 heads of state in 2000, the MDGs are eight goals, with targets to be achieved by 2015....

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is ...

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate...

Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio "

DFID Presentation

What is "development" and what is the UK doing to promote it?

www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/14119_300409_horner.pdf

Parliamentarians' "mandate" and "commitment"

Although the following are not governmental commitments, they point to implied commitments by politicians:

"We, parliamentarians from across the globe... call for our governments to recommit to the Millennium Declaration,...as a priority on the political agenda ..."

We, Parliamentarians, have the mandate to monitor government action and hold our government to account for promises made – including at international conferences. We believe a promise is a promise, and a promise to the world's poor should not be taken lightly"

Interparliamentary seminar

Final Declaration

MDGs Parliamentary Sub-Committee of the Italian Chamber of Deputies Foreign Affairs Committee

UN Millennium Campaign

The Role of National Parliaments in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals

July 2nd 2009

http://leg16.camera.it/543?shadow_mostra_allegato=22953

*"Reaffirming our commitment to the Millennium Declaration (2000) and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development ... will ensure:...
Reduced Maternal and Infant Mortality & Morbidity rates...
It is time for us to stand up and fight for women's rights..."*

UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health

Written evidence to the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee

Preparations for the Rio +20 Summit

3 August 2011

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmenvaud/1026/1026vw28.htm>