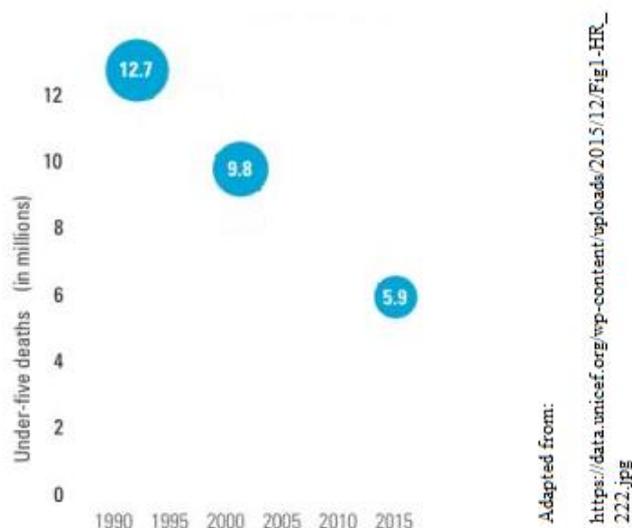


Request for review of IPSO Executive decision

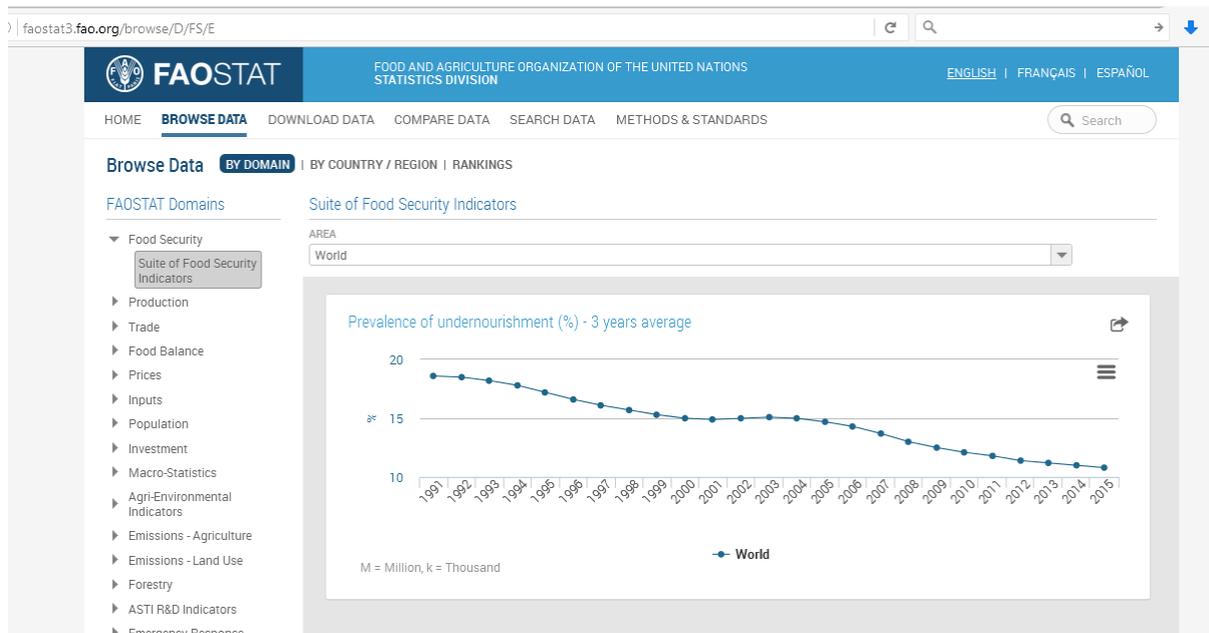
Complaint against Daily Mail, IPSO ref: 08638-16, 08639-16, 00350-15

Complainant: Matt Berkley 9 November 2016. Revised version.



Contents

Some key points.....	3
The complaint	5
Baselines are important for holding governments to account.....	8
The Executive omits the point that the Mail should reasonably have foreseen the inaccuracy.	9
The Executive omits that the Declaration contained "solemn pledges" by world leaders.....	9
Other Executive omissions	10
The Executive supplied no evidence that governments rescinded or superseded the commitments.....	11
Some evidence at a glance	15
Why is the discrepancy significant?	17
Potential conflicts of interest for Committee members	25
Appendix: The PCC's inaccuracies on the issue	34
Appendix: The scope of the Millennium Declaration is far wider than MDGs.....	36



"The core aims for education and health are stated in the UN Millennium Declaration."

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

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

Some key points

In 2013, the UN General Assembly reaffirmed the historic pledge by world leaders in 2000. ¹

The EU stated in January 2015 that its member states were strongly committed to that Millennium Declaration. ²

At the 2015 UN Summit, leaders reaffirmed the outcomes of "major United Nations conferences and summits". ³

In 2000 leaders had "resolved" to achieve certain targets. In two cases leaders mentioned a baseline of "current rates".

Contemporary news reports gave the impression that the baseline for the pledges was 2000. UN heads of agencies agreed in October 2001 that the text "would imply" a 2000 baseline.

Meanwhile, in September 2001 civil servants had proposed a set of "Millennium Development Goals" several of which had a generally easier 1990 baseline.

However, in General Assembly resolutions nations continued to restate 2000-based pledges, and their commitment to the more ambitious, and wider, Declaration. ⁴

The 2016 complaint to IPSO cited the complaint of 2014:

A Daily Mail article *"contributed to an inaccurate impression that world leaders pledged in 2000 to meet some easier targets than is in fact the case."*

The IPSO Executive in reply made two substantive points:

- a) *"the UN has confirmed that the Millennium Declaration has become known as the Millennium Development Goals as part of a broader commitment to world poverty and climate change";*

- b) *"the discrepancy between the 1990 and 2000 baselines were not significant in the context of the articles as a whole."*

¹ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Outcome%20documentMDG.pdf>

² http://eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_15930_en.htm

³ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/L.1

⁴ millenniumdeclaration.org has a large selection from UN resolutions.

The evidence clearly shows that the pledges formally agreed are, in general, significantly more ambitious than the MDG targets "proposed" by civil servants in 2001. They are also far wider.

I refer members to the evidence supplied in response to an IPSO request, in the "Further information" document of 4 October 2016.

The IPSO reply also contains inaccuracies, fails to address the arguments and omits key evidence.

The errors and omissions are concerning and seem to raise the possibility that other errors and omissions may underlie the rejection.

The complaint

The present complaint cited that of 2014 (IPSO ref. 00350-15) which read:

"An article of 19 August 2014 contributed to an inaccurate impression that world leaders pledged in 2000 to meet some easier targets than is in fact the case. The Millennium Development Goal targets were in fact proposed by the UN Secretariat in 2001. Some have easier baselines than the leaders pledged. There is no mention of the easier, backdated 1990 baseline in the leaders' Millennium Declaration. The Declaration specifically refers to the child and maternal mortality pledges as reductions from "current rates".

It is perhaps undisputed that for citizens to hold governments to account, it is a prime function of good journalism to avoid getting the commitments wrong. Other articles on the website give a similar impression."

The present complaint stated that the new material, in view of the Mail's consideration of the previous complaint,

"misled in a way which should reasonably have been foreseen".

I stated to IPSO:

"I understand that the UN has stated various things in secondary sources.

My previous complaint was about the Mail's failure to make use of primary sources, which seems to have persisted."

I stated on 4 October 2016:

"The Mail failed to inform readers adequately as to what the pledges were.

The failure was despite extensive coverage of related matters, and despite previous complaints.

The Mail failed to report what is clearly a significant international scandal: UN agencies and others have misstated the pledges.

In the complainant's submission, the newspaper's failure to inform readers adequately of the

world leaders' pledges of 2000, after complaints clarifying the position and despite relevant coverage, constitutes a breach of clause 1 of the Code.

The complainant agrees with the idea put forward in one of the articles, that in order for people to hold power to account they need the facts."

"The complaint is that the material was liable, in the context of other news coverage including from the Mail, to have given or reinforced a misleading impression either in individual items or in combination from readers seeing two or more items."

I submit that articles conflating different targets also give people impressions which they may go on to use to misinterpret other news items such as reports of targets being met by certain dates.

The question of whether countries pledged to achieve the goals in the Declaration individually is sensible, but in any case performance claims are made on the basis that they did. The conflation therefore has implications beyond global claims, to claims about which countries have met pledges.

Clearly, the discrepancy between 1990-based and 2000-based targets will vary between countries.

A Mail article of 12 November 2015 contains a passage about how many nations achieved a 1990-based goal, misleadingly juxtaposed with a mention of the UN pledge of 2000.

"In the 25 years since 1990, only nine nations across the world have achieved the UN goal of reducing maternal mortality by 75 per cent. ... UN member states pledged in 2000 to reduce maternal mortality...by three quarters by 2015 as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS)."

12 November 2015

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-3315889/TWICE-mothers-die-childbirth-Canadian-women-reveals-9-nations-reduce-maternal-death-rates-25-years.html>

But the point applies more generally. The readership for online material from British newspapers is clearly likely to be international.

The fact that I omitted such considerations from the complaint should not in my view be used to exclude them, because in my submission these kinds of consideration should be routinely taken into account - the implications of error.

Baselines are important for holding governments to account.

The Executive makes two claims about the complaints.

The first confuses the baselines. This may not inspire confidence that the Executive has considered other facts properly.

It would be accurate if it read,

"You provided evidence:

- from heads of UN agencies that the Millennium Declaration has a standard 2000 baseline;*
- that the Millennium Development Goals proposed in 2001 had a generally easier standard 1990 baseline, except for the water target."*

The Executive omitted to mention an essential part of the complaint - that **this type of material is important for holding governments to account.**

I had written,

"it is still important for people to understand what leaders actually pledged in 2000 - in line with the idea in the article of 27 September 2015 below."

This referred to the Mail's statement,

"The concept was that, in order for leaders to be held accountable to the goals, people must first be aware of them and what they are."

In my submission, that is obvious, and obviously important.

The Executive omitted other evidence I supplied, including:

- that *"nations continued to endorse the 2000-baseline Declaration"*;
- that the US claimed in 2002-5 not to have endorsed the civil servants' "MDGs".

The Executive omits the point that the Mail should reasonably have foreseen the inaccuracy.

IPSO:

"You...complained...that it was misleading for the articles... to conflate the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) with the Millennium Declaration"

Evidence:

I in fact complained on 25 September 2016 that the material

"misled in a way which should reasonably have been foreseen"

as a result of the newspaper's statement on 20 February 2015, after two months, that it had

"been able to investigate and consider your points with care".

The Executive omits that the Declaration contained "solemn pledges" by world leaders.

Other Executive omissions

The Executive omitted from the reply and attachments:

- The initial complaint of 25 September 2016;
- The copious evidence and explanations in the "further information" supplied in response to an IPSO request on 4 October;
- The previous correspondence from 2014 and 2015 showing that the newspaper had said it had considered the matter;
- The evidence of a letter from the National Audit Office;
- The evidence of a letter from the Financial Times Complaints Commissioner.

IPSO administrative problems

The previous correspondence from 2014-5 including IPSO's wrong statement that it was unable to deal with the matter for time reasons;

IPSO's wrong statement in 2016 that an article was out of time;

One of the IPSO attachments wrongly gives the impression, through the wrong date of submission and wrong date for the articles, that the complaint was over 12 months after one or more of the articles' publication.

The Executive supplied no evidence that governments rescinded or superseded the commitments

IPSO's first of the two planks in its case is:

"the UN has confirmed [?] that the Millennium Declaration has become known as the Millennium Development Goals as part of a broader [?] commitment [?] to world poverty and climate change".

The fact that people employed to serve the public have made misleading statements is an argument for journalists to publish the truth, not to repeat the falsehood.

I find disturbing that IPSO might put forward a view that the existence of propaganda justifies parroting it.

If the IPSO Executive is claiming that after 2000, UN members replaced the harder pledges with the easier targets as part of a "wider" initiative on development and climate change, that is a flawed idea.

It is important to understand the difference between

- a) formal "pledges" by leaders in 2000 formally reaffirmed in subsequent years and
- b) proposals by civil servants in 2001 of more dubious status in UN resolutions.

But in any case, since governments did not rescind the more ambitious pledges, they were still committed to them.

The Executive provides no primary evidence that the proposed MDG targets were formally agreed in any UN resolution.

Contrary to what might be taken from the Executive's statement, the Declaration's scope far exceeds that of the MDGs, and does include a commitment on climate change.⁵

⁵ Evidence in "Appendix: The scope of the Millennium Declaration was wider than MDGs", at the end of the present document.

.....

"the UN has confirmed [?] that the Millennium Declaration has become known [?] as the Millennium Development Goals..."

Comment: It is not clear whether "the UN" means civil servants - who have no power to promise or alter promises on behalf of governments - or member states.

It is not clear how a person can "confirm" the 2000-baseline Declaration is "known" as "MDGs". The latter is a term widely accepted as referring to the goals with a standard 1990 baseline.

The fact that civil servants or politicians may have been unclear or misleading should be a reason for journalists to tell the truth, not to obscure it or omit it.

If I promise you £10, then later promise you £5, it is not clear how I have got out of the original promise.

It is not clear how any claimed "UN" statement by civil servants or anyone else might override General Assembly resolutions.

IPSO continues,

"... as part of a broader [?] commitment [?] to world poverty and climate change".

Comment:

Again IPSO gives no evidence of specific UN resolutions or other agreement for the "commitment".

Nor does not say why such a "commitment" might override the leaders' more ambitious, documented commitments.

Contrary to what IPSO may be taken as meaning, the actual commitments in 2000 are far broader than the MDGs and do include climate change: *"Kyoto protocol....greenhouse gases"*.⁶

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

⁶ Ditto.

IPSO supplied no further evidence for its claim that a difference of millions of children's lives is not significant. It fails to address the relevant context.

The Executive's other plank of its case is:

"the discrepancy between the 1990 and 2000 baselines were not significant in the context of the articles as a whole".

I supplied evidence that the discrepancy is significant, in the real world.

I stated in relation to the 2014 complaint, in a passage quoted again on 4 October 2016:

"The UN report over 9 million child deaths in 2000, the baseline for the pledge from "current rates".

The UN report over 12 million child deaths in 1990, the baseline for the MDG target proposed in 2001.

The difference since 2000 is several million child deaths."

In the "further information" document of 4 October, I supplied evidence in the form of charts for other targets. The relevant section is,

"Illustrations: What difference does the baseline make to beliefs about UN Millennium pledges?".

According to the Editors' Code, the burden of proof is on the publication. It would be absurd if IPSO had a lesser standard than the publications.

IPSO gives no evidence that adding progress in the 1990s to the claims of success is "not significant", and no reason for ignoring the wider context.

The IPSO claim is closer to a "decision" than an "explanation for a decision". IPSO provides in my view a legitimate expectation that it will give a genuine explanation.

It fails to address the evidence that the discrepancy was significant for the reported statistics.⁷

⁷ "Illustrations: What difference does the baseline make to beliefs about UN Millennium pledges?", in "Further information" document 4 October 2016.

The complaint was in fact that the material misled in the context of other information readers would already be likely to be aware of, including from previous Mail articles.

My argument was that a broader context should be taken into account.⁸

IPSO did not address the context of:

i) previous Mail articles;

ii) the Mail's being informed previously of the discrepancy;

iii) the evidence of significant differences between the targets and pledges in the cases of hunger and water;

iv) readers' prior knowledge of MDG targets having 1990 baselines;

v) the evidence of nations renewing the 2000-baseline pledges;

vi) the evidence of the US government not accepting the MDG framework by 2005;

vii) the need, expressed in one of the Mail articles identified, to hold governments to account for their actual promises.

On 6 November 2016 I notified the Executive of a further problematic article dated 16 October 2016 and a possible conflict of interest for one committee member.

⁸ "Appendix: Context of readers' previous exposure to information", in same document.

Some evidence at a glance

"maternal mortality and under-five mortality - the term "current rates" is used, directly specifying a 2000 baseline... This would imply a 2000 baseline year of the Millennium Declaration."

Heads of UN development agencies, 6 November 2001 ⁹

"The G-8 agreed that support for good governance...is essential to... achieving the goals of the Millennium Declaration."

The White House, July 2008 ¹⁰

2013: *"We, Heads of State and Government...reaffirm our commitment to the Millennium Declaration."* ¹¹

"Having been put on-notice of the important distinction between the possible baselines, and the ways in which the MDGs may differ from the Millennium Declaration (as affirmed unamended in 2005), it would be disappointing if future articles in Financial Times were to elide the two, or fail to recognise the distinction. Were it particularly germane to the particular article, my decision under Clause 1.1 might be different now that the Complainant has put Financial Times on notice of this potentially important question of fact"

Financial Times complaints commissioner

Adjudication dated 29 March 2015

<http://aboutus.ft.com/files/2010/09/Matt-Berkley-adjudication.pdf>

Daily Mail, 12 November 2015:

"As part of the Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2000, UN member states pledged to reduce maternal mortality by 75 percent by 2015 from 1990 levels." ¹²

⁹ web.archive.org/web/*/http://undg.org/archive_docs/2356-English.doc

web.archive.org/web/20140209140920/http://undg.org/archive_docs/1607-MDGs_-_letter_-_MDGs_-_letter.pdf

¹⁰ <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/07/20080708-17.html>

¹¹ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N13/490/97/DOC/N1349097.DOC>

¹² <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3315041/Maternal-mortality-cut-half-25-years-UN.html>

I note that a new article contains a similar inaccuracy.

The following clearly indicates the wrong baseline for world leaders' "promises" at the "global conference" of 2000.

"AN EFFECTIVE UN?

...some global conferences have produced tangible results.

In 2000, governments promised to halve the number of people living in extreme poverty as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They largely succeeded in meeting the eight measurable objectives.

The number of people living on less than \$1.25 per day dropped to 836 million in 2015 from 1.9 billion in 1990.

Goals on getting children into primary school, reducing hunger and improving access to water were either met or narrowly missed."

Daily Mail, 16 October 2016 ¹³

¹³ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3841096/Can-UN-Habitat-summit-help-worlds-swelling-ranks-urban-poor.html>

Why is the discrepancy significant?

I provided further detail on 4 October 2016.

On child deaths:

"The child mortality pledge in the Declaration according to current official statistics would be for below about 3.6 million child deaths in 2015, not the 4.3 million implied by the MDG target.

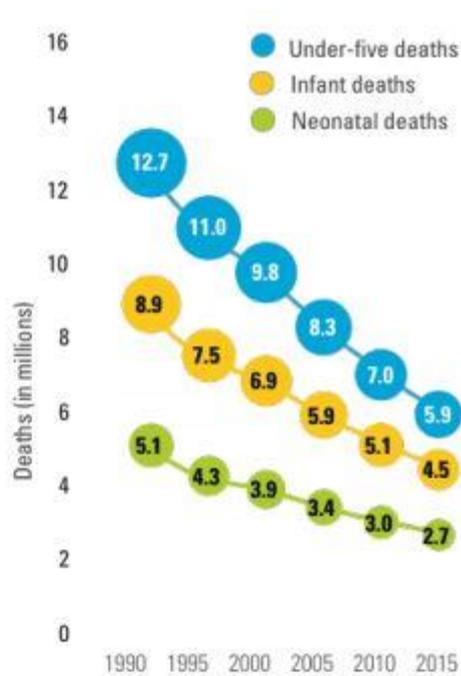
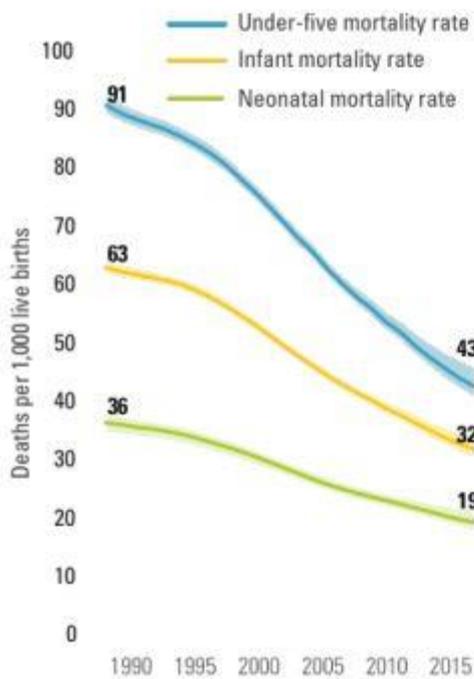
The difference in 2000-15 assuming constant progress and reliable statistics would be about 5 million children saved"

Official data are here:

<https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/under-five-mortality/>

The 1990 and 2000 baselines are clearly significantly different in practice.

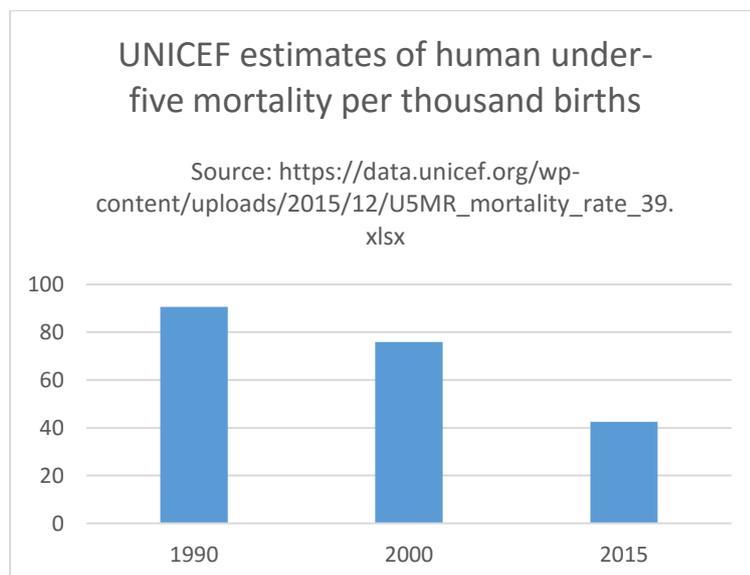
Looking at the blue curve on the left, we can see that a 2000 baseline is considerably lower than the 1990 baseline:



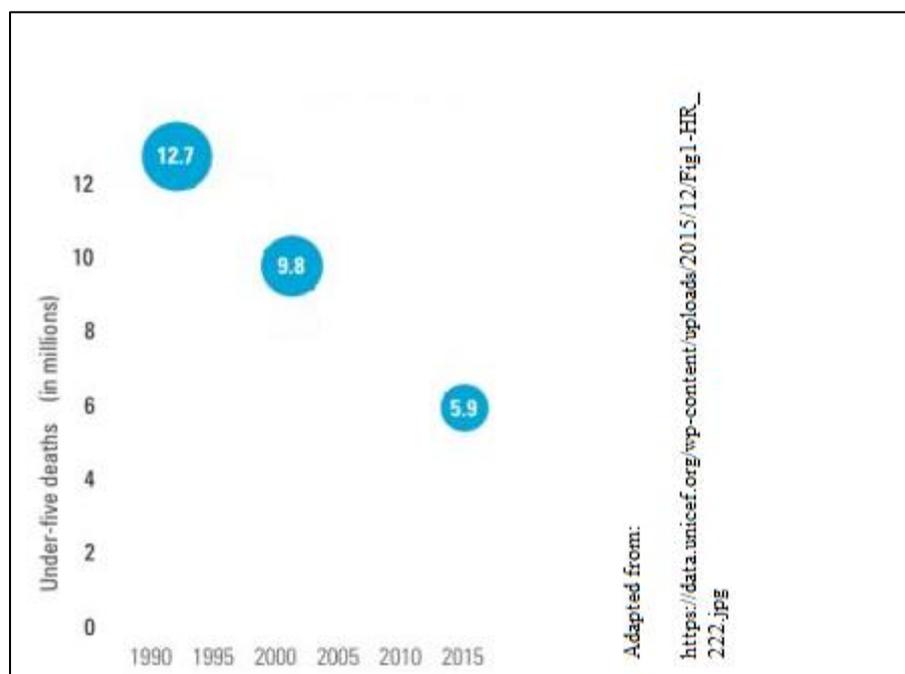
https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Fig1-HR_222.jpg

The child mortality pledge was in effect, according to the official middle estimate, for under a third of the rate in 2000: 76 deaths per thousand. 25, or 2.5%.

The easier MDG target with a 1990 baseline of 91 was for under 30 per thousand, or 3%.



Child deaths in numbers:



There has not been a vast change in the annual number of births.

It should not be too difficult to see that the difference between the pledge and the easier target, over the fifteen years, is several million child deaths.

On maternal mortality, the figures are notoriously problematic.

The official mid-point estimates are for 385 per 100,000 births in 1990 and 341 in 2000.

The pledge was therefore for $385/4 = 96$ and the easier target $341/4 = 85$.

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.MMRT>

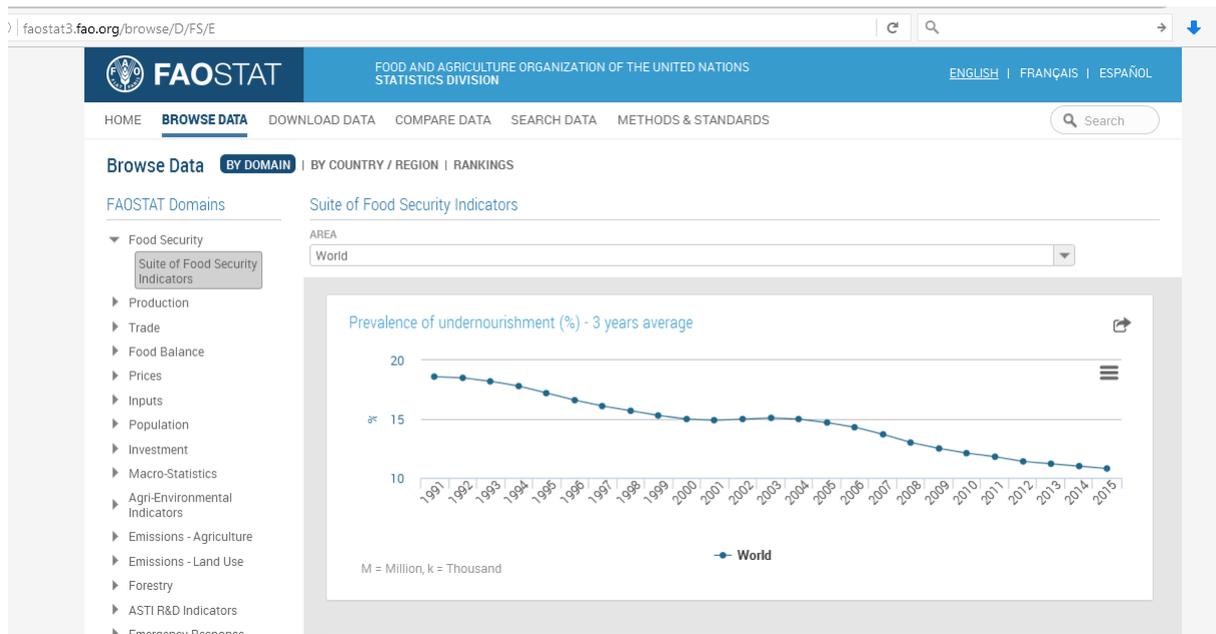
On hunger I stated:

"10.8% is nowhere near a halving of 15%."

Conflating the pledge with the MDG target can lead people to think the pledge was from the 1990 level.

Using the official "prevalence of undernourishment" indicator (whose reliability and relevance to the pledge I am not endorsing) the pledge would mean halving 15%, not halving something over 18%.

I supplied this chart:



Again, it is fundamental to democracy that people can hold governments to account.

I refer members of the Committee to the evidence supplied, including in the "Further information" document of 4 October 2016.

IPSO does not clearly dispute that the Mail effectively understated world leaders' promises.

I had written,

"nations continued to endorse the 2000-baseline Declaration";

and

"UN staff confused the actual pledges [by leaders in the Millennium Declaration] with the proposed targets [put forward by civil servants and of uncertain status in UN resolutions]"

and supplied evidence. ¹⁴

¹⁴ UN documents quoted in "Further information" supplied in response to IPSO request 4 October 2016, pages 26-27.

IPSO replied with no evidence,

"...the UN has confirmed [!] that the Millennium Declaration has become known [!] as the Millennium Development Goals..."

In reality governments recommitted themselves to the more ambitious - and wider - pledges.

15

I had quoted the following:

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

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

www.worldlii.org/int/other/UNGA/2001/301.pdf

IPSO did not address the argument about context, in "Appendix: Context of readers' previous exposure to information" (4 October 2016).

"In the complainant's view the context, including other or older articles is appropriate to take into account.

In the complainant's view, a significant proportion of readers of the material complained of were likely already to associate MDGs with the 1990 baseline or with claims of success which used that baseline."

I stated:

¹⁵ www.un.org/esa/ffd/monterrey/MonterreyConsensus.pdf

Quoted in same document from complainant, page 28.

"...the 2002 Johannesburg Summit had referred to "the prevailing rate in 2000" for its mortality pledges.

(unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/envpdf/2003-33e.pdf)"

IPSO did not provide evidence that the UN General Assembly had "adopted" the MDG framework in any resolution.

I stated,

The National Audit Office, the Guardian, Reuters and the Financial Times have amended publications following complaints on this issue."

I argued on 25 September 2016,

"In my view it is still important for people to understand what leaders actually pledged in 2000 - in line with the idea in the article of 27 September 2015 below."

This referred to the idea the Mail had cited, which was quoted in the complaint,

"in order for leaders to be held accountable to the goals, people must first be aware of them and what they are."

Lord Black of Brentwood to House of Lords, 2011:

"This is an area where a free media with well trained professional health journalists must play a key role....holding Governments to account requires a well trained and free media if we are to make further progress in dealing with the cruel scourge of maternal morbidity."

Lord Black did not note that the previous speaker had, like many other people, made a key error in "holding governments to account". The speaker had misleadingly juxtaposed

"The commitment made by world leaders"

- the pledge of 2000 was from "current rates" - with

"Millennium Goal 5"

whose target has an easier baseline of 1990.

"A good journalist must not only describe, but delve, debunk and decode. International development is complex, slow, non-prescriptive and uncertain. It requires the reporter to appreciate and explore the interplay of diverse realms such as health, education, environment, governance, local and national economics, and culture," says Ribbans. "

<https://www.theguardian.com/journalismcompetition/professional-what-is-development-journalism>

Potential conflicts of interest for Committee members

Some of the following were not under the direct control of members at the time, but still published by organisations with which they have had links.

1. Clear related error by Committee member:

"A little over a year ago, the Guardian launched its global development site, providing special focus on the millennium development goals, the eight targets set in 2000 by the United Nations Millennium Declaration with the aim of improving the lives of the world's poorest people by 2015. "

Elizabeth Ribbans

25 October 2011

<https://www.theguardian.com/help/insideguardian/2011/oct/25/gates-foundation-reaffirms-commitment-global-development>

2. Error in newspaper when member not editor

"...pressure on world leaders to fulfil the promise they made to reduce maternal mortality by two-thirds before 2015. This aim was one of the Millennium Development Goals set out in 2000. "

Thanks for campaign help knitters | West Briton

<http://www.westbriton.co.uk/thanks-campaign-help-knitters/story-11469928-detail/story.html>

3. A former editor of the Radio Times sits on the Committee.

In view of the published errors in recent editions of the Radio Times, and errors in BBC text about programmes during the member's time editing the magazine, there would appear to be a reasonable possibility that similar inaccuracies appeared in the magazine during her editorship.

It is not therefore clear to me that it would be appropriate for this member to take part in this complaints process.

Millennium Goals

Millennium Goals

Episodes

About the BBC World Service Archive Project

Contact

BBC

**WORLD
SERVICE**

Making Promises

In September 2000, the United Nations voted to adopt eight Millennium Goals, which member states have pledged to try and fulfil before 2015. They cover poverty, women's rights, education, trade and health. Can the world can meet these targets and offer the poor new lives? The show looks at the goals and talks to people connected to the task of fulfilling them.

1 March 2003

🕒 15 minutes

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/panorama/4119098.stm

Last Updated: Friday, 24 June, 2005, 16:41 GMT 17:41 UK

Panorama
 About Panorama
 Archive

RELATED BBC SITES
 SPORT
 WEATHER
 CBBC NEWSROUND
 ON THIS DAY
 EDITORS' BLOG

E-mail this to a friend Printable version

What are the MDGs?

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) were agreed by 189 countries in New York in 2000.

These goals represent a commitment by rich and poor nations to expand social and economic progress in all regions of the world, as well as creating a global partnership for reducing levels of poverty and suffering in less developed areas by 2015.

Each MDG also includes a number of indicators designed to measure its progress, which are intended to be tracked and updated regularly by UN member governments and international governing bodies such as the World Bank.

For Goal 5: which is to "Improve maternal health" the indicators are

- The maternal mortality ratio
- Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

The Millennium Development Goals

- ♦ 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- ♦ 2: Achieve universal primary education
- ♦ 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- ♦ 4: Reduce child mortality
- ♦ 5: Improve maternal health
- ♦ 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- ♦ 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- ♦ 8: Develop a global partnership for development

PANORAMA

- ▶ Dead mums don't cry
- ▶ Featured article
- ▶ What are the MDGs?
- ▶ Maternal Health Facts and Figures
- ▶ Further information
- ▶ Programme Transcript
- ▶ Your comments
- ▶ In pictures: Tackling maternal mortality

SEARCH PANORAMA:

Radio Times, 2015:

"We hear about their aspirations and see whether the Millennium Development Goals agreed by 180 world leaders in 2000 (to reduce poverty and improve life expectancy) look any nearer to fruition."

<http://www.radiotimes.com/tv-programme/e/dr8wwf/millennium-children>

"The success (and failure) of the Millennium Development Goals - a set of 8 key development indicators launched in 2000"

<http://www.radiotimes.com/radio-programme/e/dn9bg2/business-matters--02072015>

Readers' Digest publication, 2010:

"Back in 2000, 192 nations set eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by 2015. These included reducing the world's number of hungry people by half... Reducing the number of women who die during pregnancy or childbirth by three quarters was one of these goals ..."

... While the number of child deaths fell from around 13 million in 1990 to less than 10 million in 2006, the number of maternal mortalities has remained virtually static."

Best Health Magazine Canada

<http://www.besthealthmag.ca/best-you/health/maternal-health-10-reasons-you-should-care-about-the-g8-summit/>

4. As I understand it one current member of the Committee was in March 2014 a member of the Press Complaints Commission, which as I explain in this document, was inaccurate in its treatment of this issue.

Other evidence

From: Simon Yip <simon.yip@ipso.co.uk>

23 January 2015

...the article you wish to complain about was published prior to 8 September. In these circumstances, I am afraid we will be unable to take forward your complaint.

23 January 2015

Dear Mr Yip,

...IPSO's public information states,

"it would clearly be unsatisfactory to prohibit complaints about all material published prior to 8 September. Therefore, IPSO will, with the agreement of the relevant publisher, consider complaints about material and conduct dating back to 8 July 2014."

<https://www.ipso.co.uk/ipso/makeacomplaint/makingacomplaint.html#delay>

From: Ben Gallop <ben.gallop@ipso.co.uk>

Date: 29 January 2015

Subject: IPSO ref 00350-15

...As I explained, IPSO may be able to take forward your complaint...

From: noreply@dmgmedia.co.uk

10 February 2015 12:15

To: Corrections

...The UN report over 9 million child deaths in 2000, the baseline for the pledge from "current rates".

The UN report over 12 million child deaths in 1990, the baseline for the MDG target proposed in 2001.

The difference since 2000 is several million child deaths.

In 2005 member states stated in General Assembly Resolution 60/1 that they

"reaffirm the United Nations Millennium Declaration".

unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Attach/Indicators/ares60_1_2005summit_eng.pdf

"The U.S. supports completing certain time-bound "core" goals in the Millennium Declaration, but does not utilize the UN's MDG "Road Map" or its performance indicators. We strongly support the original goals set out in the Millennium Declaration...

The MDGs are the internationally agreed goals in the Millennium Declaration, signed in 2000. The U.S. focuses on contributing towards achieving certain time-bound "core" goals in the Declaration:

-- 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."

https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08STATE47433_a.html

The latest, 2014 version of the Editors' Codebook states:

"The burden of proof, as always in the PCC system, falls on the editors. If they wish to claim the story was true, then they will need to demonstrate that there were no significant inaccuracies or distortions and that it was not misleading."

Neither IPSO nor the Mail have "demonstrated" any of these. IPSO has simply asserted that there was no significant inaccuracy, based on vague and apparently incorrect information that the UN "confirmed" the Declaration became "known" as the Goals.

The Codebook also reads:

"Was it significant? The spirit of the Code protects a substantially true story from failing due to a trifling error. The PCC's commonsense test of significance is simple: How much does it

really matter? Getting a name wrong could be merely irritating — or wholly fundamental. The context would be crucial. The PCC might need to decide if the alleged error, taken alone, was of consequence, or even if a series of relatively minor errors, taken together, were likely to mislead or distort."

"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
web.archive.org/web/*/http://undg.org/archive_docs/2356-English.doc

The guidance note was sent by UN Development Group (committee of heads of UN agencies, programmes and funds) chairman Mark Malloch Brown and three other heads of UN agencies on 6 November 2001:

web.archive.org/web/20140209140920/http://undg.org/archive_docs/1607-MDGs_-_letter_-_MDGs_-_letter.pdf

Clearly likely to give the impression that world leaders agreed a 1990 baseline:

"12 November 2015

...Only nine countries have achieved a U.N. development goal of reducing the number of women dying before, during or after giving birth by 75 percent since 1990, the United Nations and the World Bank said on Thursday.

Worldwide, maternal mortality fell by 43 percent in the 25-year period...they said in a report.

"Over the past 25 years, a woman's risk of dying from pregnancy-related causes has nearly halved," said Flavia Bustreo, assistant director-general for family, women's and children's health at the World Health Organization (WHO).

U.N. member states pledged in 2000 to reduce maternal mortality, defined as a woman's death during pregnancy, childbirth or within 6 weeks after birth, by three quarters by 2015 as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS).

The Maldives, Bhutan, Cambodia, Cape Verde, East Timor, Iran, Laos, Mongolia and Rwanda reduced maternal mortality by between 78 and 90 percent, the organisations' report said.

Globally, the number of maternal deaths dropped 43 percent to an estimated 303,000 this year from about 532,000 in 1990, or to 216 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births from 385 in 1990, the report said."

Maternal deaths drop sharply, but only nine nations meet U.N. goal

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3315398/Maternal-deaths-drop-sharply-nine-nations-meet-U-N-goal.html>

The article complained of in December 2014 had juxtaposed

"action to achieve the U.N. Millennium Development Goals"

with

"World leaders agreed in 2000 on anti-poverty goals".

A consequence of IPSO not informing the Mail of the full complaint?

Complainant to IPSO, 4 October 2016:

"The FAO figures which the Mail used for the "achieved" claim are not estimates on people suffering from hunger but something officially showing a faster fall. .

They are on chronic, severe calorie lack - not the number of people "suffering from hunger" as specified in the Millennium Declaration."

Daily Mail, 16 October 2016:

*"In 2000, governments promised to halve the number of people living in extreme poverty...
Goals on...reducing hunger and improving access to water were either met or narrowly missed."*

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3841096/Can-UN-Habitat-summit-help-worlds-swelling-ranks-urban-poor.html>

Appendix: The PCC's inaccuracies on the issue

In 2013, complaint 135245 to the Press Complaints Commission included a complaint that The Economist had, in several articles, understated world leaders' pledges of 2000.

It had, for example, stated:

"In September 2000 the heads of 147 governments pledged that they would halve the proportion of people on the Earth living in the direst poverty by 2015, using the poverty rate in 1990 as a baseline."

The Economist failed to answer the allegation at all.

I reiterated that this was a "major error".

The PCC still did not obtain any answer from the editor on this.

Because of the PCC previously garbling complaints, I wrote,
*"I therefore request that in the circumstances Commission staff take all reasonable precautions to ensure:
that Members are given my summaries of complaints as stated in my documents".*

PCC staff replied on 27 January 2014: *"I can assure you, however, that Commissioners will be provided with a thorough summary of your complaints.
I note your concern that the Commission not misunderstand your complaint"*

The PCC decision garbled the complaint as:

"readers had been misled by the claim that the Millennium Development Goals were set in the year 2000".

It said nothing about baselines, or pledges, or understating.

It wrongly claimed this complaint was only about one article.

The PCC dismissed the point, giving as a reason the untrue claim,

"the MDG's were signed in the year 2000".

As I wrote to the PCC:

"The Economist's wrong statements about the Millennium Declaration baseline, which I described in my submission of 16 January as a "major error", are an example of a complaint which I did make, but the Commission did not address."

"[the Commission] did not address the actual breach alleged: an overall breach caused by problems including the major error about the UN baseline."

Neither the PCC nor The Economist ever acknowledged what I had described as a "major error".

I wrote to the Independent Reviewer:

"The Commission issued a decision about some of the articles on March 4 2014. It omitted the only problem I described as a "major error". This was the first item on the first page of the main complaint document. The relevant word "pledge" appears over forty times in the complaint.

The Commission ignored my suggestion that the complaint was a cumulative one - that problems added up to an overall breach. The Commission's arguments that individual passages did not breach the Code did not address the actual complaint. Again, this was on the first page: "The Commission may consider that systematic distortions can add up to something more significant"; also "The Economist has systematically distorted facts on goals, targets and research over a period of years." After the Economist's response I again emphasised this point."

Appendix: The scope of the Millennium Declaration is far wider than MDGs

It includes:

"greenhouse gases";
"human rights";
"rule of law in international affairs";
"reform of the Security Council";
affordable water;
"equitable...predictable...trading and financial system";
"new technologies";
"Discrimination against Women";
"disarmament";
"debt relief";
"benefits of new technologies";
"freedom of the media";
"access to information".

Quotations from the Declaration:

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

"We believe that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people."

"We resolve...

...to ensure compliance by Member States with the decisions of the International Court of Justice...

To ensure the implementation, by States Parties, of treaties in areas such as arms control and disarmament and of international humanitarian law and human rights law...

To strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons"

"we resolve:

To make every effort to ensure the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, preferably by the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 2002, and to embark on the required reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases."

"forests"

"We are committed to an open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial system."

"We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want."

"essential drugs"

"To implement the enhanced programme of debt relief for the heavily indebted poor countries without further delay and to agree to cancel all official bilateral debts of those countries in return for their making demonstrable commitments to poverty reduction"

"To ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, in conformity with recommendations contained in the ECOSOC 2000 Ministerial Declaration, are available to all."

"Biological Diversity"

"To stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources"

"We resolve therefore:

- To respect fully and uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*
- To strive for the full protection and promotion in all our countries of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all. ...*

...to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. ...

- *To ensure the freedom of the media to perform their essential role and the right of the public to have access to information.*"

"We resolve...

To strengthen the International Court of Justice, in order to ensure justice and the rule of law in international affairs."

"We resolve therefore: ...

- *To intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects."*

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