

Millennium Development Goals: Progress during the 1990s, Summary Report

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Introduction

The adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000 by all 189 member states of the UN General Assembly was a defining moment for global co-operation in the 21st century. The Declaration sets out within a single framework the key challenges facing humanity at the threshold of the new millennium, outlines a response to these challenges, and establishes concrete measures for judging performance through a set of inter-related commitments, goals and targets on development, governance, peace, security and human rights. The Declaration brings unprecedented clarity to the shared and individual roles and responsibilities of key parties: of governments to achieve or enable the achievement of goals and targets; of the network of international organisations to marshal their resources and expertise in the most strategic and efficient way possible to support and sustain the efforts of partners at global and country levels; of citizens, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector, to engage fully in this ground-breaking effort, by bringing to bear their unique strengths for motivation, mobilisation and action.

This report presents data on progress towards the quantitative development goals and targets in the Declaration. The data are the best currently available to describe developments since the baseline 1990. However, the MDG process has demonstrated that there are a number of shortcomings in almost all of the data series. In fact, due to incomplete geographic coverage, global estimates could not be provided for all indicators. While the agencies have accepted the task to work together to better understand and reduce the uncertainty in the data, a necessary condition for better monitoring of the MDG indicators is increased national capacity to produce data. This is essential for national planning and evaluation as well as for tracking international goals.

Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

The proportion of people living in extreme poverty – defined as average per capita consumption of \$1 a day or less – declined from 29 percent in 1990 to 23 percent in 1999. Based on past progress, East Asia and the Pacific is the only region on a path to meet the income poverty target of reducing by half the proportion of people in extreme poverty by 2015 – a goal the region has

¹ See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mdg_report.pdf for the full 65-page report.

come close to meeting in one decade, before the financial crisis in the region set in. For the other regions, the rate of reduction will have to accelerate substantially to achieve the target by 2015.

Though progress has been made in reducing hunger and malnutrition in the developing world, this is not happening fast enough. In 1997-99, 17 per cent of the population suffered from food deprivation, as compared to 20 per cent in 1990-92. Progress was also made in the reduction of child malnutrition during the 1990s: the underweight prevalence rate in developing regions as a whole declined from 32 to 28 per cent. But sub-Saharan Africa remained stuck at a third of the population on each measure.

Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education

The net enrolment ratio for primary education increased during the 1990s—from 78 per cent enrolled in 1990 to 82 per cent in 1998. From 1990 to 2000, the youth literacy rate in developing countries increased from an estimated 81 per cent to 84 per cent. But one-third of children in Africa are out of primary school and around a quarter in South Asia

Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women

Gender disparity in education

Despite signs of progress in some regions, a gender gap in enrolment remains at all levels of education. In primary and secondary education, the sex ratios increased between 1990 and 1998, but remain low at 0.87 and 0.82 respectively. Although parity or better has been reached in tertiary education in Latin American and Southeast Asia, for developing regions as a whole, there are on average 75 women per 100 men enrolled.

Although the number of illiterate women aged 15 to 24 has been decreasing from 100 million in 1990 to 86 million in 2000, the gender gap has remained substantially the same with women accounting for 61% of the total. Moreover, the progress differs from one region to another, and in some countries the gender gap in literacy has in fact widened over the decade.

Women's access to political decision-making

Globally the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments increased from 13 per cent in 1990 to 14 per cent in 2002. However, only in 10 countries, has the presence of women in parliaments **ever** reached or exceeded 30 per cent and no country has ever achieved equal participation of women and men.

Goal 4. Reduce child mortality

Estimates of the under-five mortality rate (U5MR) indicate that between 1990 and 2000, child mortality decreased from 103 to 91 per 1,000 live births. However, there are large differences between regions in the reduction of U5MR: the region with the lowest level of U5MR experienced the largest reduction (31 per cent), while the region with the highest level of U5MR achieved one of the smallest reductions (3 per cent). If trends in U5MR during the 1990s continue at the same rate to 2015, the reduction of U5MR worldwide over the period 1990 to 2015 will be about one quarter, far from the goal of a two-thirds reduction.

Among the childhood vaccine-preventable diseases, measles is the leading cause of child mortality. Measles immunisation is therefore an essential component in reducing U5MR. Globally measles immunisation coverage has stagnated during the 1990s at marginally above 70 per cent.

Goal 5. Improve maternal health

The maternal mortality ratio is estimated to be 440 per 100,000 live births. The proportion of women who deliver with the assistance of a skilled health care provider – doctor, nurse, midwife – is highly correlated with maternal mortality and can be used to track trends over time. Trends in this indicator during the 1990s suggest that progress was made, with an overall increase from 42 to 53 per cent between 1990 and 2000.

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

Tracking HIV prevalence among 15-to-24-year-olds provides an approximation of the number of new infections and gives an indication of the impact of prevention programmes. At the end of 1999, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the young population was estimated to be 1.2 per cent for women and 0.7 per cent for men.

In the context of prevention measures, condoms represent an effective way to prevent sexual transmission of HIV. Between 1990 and 2000, the contraceptive prevalence rate increased from an estimated 57 per cent in 1990 to 67 per cent in 2000. Within the overall contraceptive prevalence rate, globally just 7 per cent used condoms.²

Two other diseases – malaria and tuberculosis - account for a large share of disease burden in developing regions. For the world as a whole in 2000, malaria mortality among children 0-4 years was estimated at 906,000 deaths, a death rate in this age group of 148 per 100,000. Estimates for the same year indicate that tuberculosis was the cause of death for 1.7 million people—a death rate of 27.5 per 100,000—and the global TB prevalence was 123 per 100,000.

Prevention and treatment measures exist for malaria—namely use of insecticide treated bed nets and effective treatment measures—but have not been made available to people who need them most. An inexpensive prevention and treatment strategy for tuberculosis has also been identified—the DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short Course) programmes. There has been a steady increase in cases detected and cured under DOTS since 1994.

² Amongst contraceptive methods, only condoms are effective in preventing HIV transmission. The contraceptive prevalence rate is also useful in tracking progress in other health, gender and poverty goals. Because the condom use rate is only measured amongst women in union, it will be supplemented by an indicator on condom use in high risk situations. These indicators will be augmented with an indicator of knowledge and misconceptions regarding HIV/AIDS by 15-24 year-olds.

Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability

Land area covered by forests

During the period 1990-2000, the decrease in tropical forest was 14.2 million hectares per year, 97 per cent of global deforestation. This decrease was only partially offset by the expansion of plantation forests elsewhere. The estimated net loss during the decade was 9.4 million hectares per year.

Protected areas

The proportion of protected areas in the world increased from 7.5 percent in 1990 to 9.5 percent in 2000—that is from 1 billion hectares to 1.28 billion hectares. The number of protected areas also increased between 1990 and 2000, although at a slower rate than in the 1980s.

Energy efficiency

Energy efficiency has increased globally with the most significant improvements occurring in lower-middle income economies. Nevertheless, the gap between high- and low-income economies has widened in this decade. In 1990 the low-income economies, on average, were using 324 kg oil equivalent to produce \$1,000 worth of GDP measured in purchasing power parity terms, compared with 258 kg in high-income economies – 26 per cent more. By 1999, low-income economies were using 277 kg oil equivalent, compared to 208 kg in high-income economies – or 33 percent more.

Carbon-dioxide emissions

The main agent causing the greenhouse effect is carbon dioxide (CO₂) - mainly from burning coal, oil, and natural gas. Globally, anthropogenic emissions of CO₂ increased from 6,096 million metric tonnes of carbon in 1990 to 6,608 million in 1998, some 8 per cent. Between 1990 and 1999, overall emissions in developed regions, excluding transition economies, rose by 7 per cent. In developing countries, CO₂ emissions increased by 29 percent between 1990 and 1998, from 2,126 to 2,756 million metric tonnes.

Ozone-depleting substances

Countries that ratified the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987) committed to phase out the consumption of Chlorofluorocarbon (CFCs). Industrialised countries have reduced their consumption from nearly 1 million ozone depleting potential (ODP) tonnes to a residual amount of 24,000 ODP tonnes. Developing countries' consumption of CFCs has decreased by nearly a third since the mid-1990's to some 118,000 ODP tonnes.

Access to improved water sources

During 1990-2000, the percentage of the world population with access to improved water sources rose from 77 to 82 per cent - a rate of progress that, if sustained, is sufficient to reach the goal of halving the proportion of people without access to safe water by 2015. Although rural areas have seen the greatest improvements in coverage—from 64 to 71 per cent—compared with urban areas—from 94 to 95 per cent—they remain poorly served in terms of access to safe water.

Urban population with access to improved sanitation

Over 1990-2000, access to improved sanitation increased from 51 to 61 per cent globally and from 81 to 85 per cent in urban areas. Despite these gains, in 2000 about 2.4 billion people still lacked access.

Population with secure tenure

Currently, almost half the world population lives in cities. By 2020, this percentage will increase to 56 per cent and from 40 to 51 per cent in developing countries, some 200 million in slums. There are no recent data, but in 1993 a third of people had no secure tenure varying from over half in Africa to a quarter in Latin America.

Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development

Official development assistance

Since 1990, ODA has fallen by 5 per cent in real terms and by as much as 33 per cent as a share of donors' national income. The share of ODA going to Least Developed Countries has declined from 27 per cent to 22 per cent, to small islands states from 2.8 per cent to 2.4 per cent, while the share to the landlocked countries has risen slightly, but only because new countries—mainly formerly Soviet Republics—have entered the group. Within the reduced total, however, more is going to basic social services, up from 8 per cent of ODA in 1995 to 14 per cent of ODA in 2000, and over 80 per cent of aid is no longer tied to procurement of goods and services in the donor country. Since January 2002, practically all aid to LDCs is untied.

Improved access to market

The overall share of duty-free imports (excluding arms) from developing countries into developed countries has increased between 1996 and 2000 - from 47 per cent to 61 per cent. The group of LDCs shows a similar – although more irregular - trend, with the share of duty-free imports rising from 63 to 72 per cent. However, when the data are adjusted to exclude oil exports, the share of duty-free imports for developing countries still rose, while for LDCs it fell from 77 to 66 per cent. Market access for developing countries in textiles and clothing only improved slightly and the preferential margin for LDCs did not improve significantly. A number of developed countries have recently made significant changes to their programmes for preferential market access, which could help improve on these past trends.

Agricultural support in developed countries has fallen in the last decade from 1.9 to 1.3 per cent of their combined GDP. However, it still represents a cost of some \$320 billion to their taxpayers and consumers and constrains agricultural growth and market access opportunities for developing countries.

Some 2.4 per cent of ODA in 2001 was committed to building trade capacity in developing and transition countries.³

³ WTO and OECD, First Joint WTO/OECD Report on Trade Related Technical Assistance and Capacity Building, November/December 2002.

Debt sustainability

The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative has started to bring some \$41 billion worth of debt relief to 26 countries. As of end 2000, 22 countries had reached their decision points under the Initiative—which is when a country’s eligibility and the amount of debt relief are determined and debt relief starts flowing. By end-April 2002, 26 countries were benefiting from HIPC debt relief. By end-April 2002, 5 countries had reached their completion points, which is when the remainder of the pledged relief is delivered unconditionally and irrevocably.

Develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth

Approximately 66 million young women and men were estimated to be unemployed in the world in 1999. This means that young people accounted for about 41 per cent of the global 160 million persons classified as unemployed. Youth unemployment rose by 8 million between 1995 and 1999 to some 10.3 percent.

Providing access to affordable essential drugs

It is estimated that today, still one person in three lack regular access to essential drugs. There has been some improvement from twenty-five years ago when less than one person in two had such access.

Ensure that the benefits of new technologies are available to all

The number of mobile phone subscribers has grown from 11 million in 1990 to just short of 1 billion in 2001. The number of countries connected to the global network rose from only 27 in 1990 to almost every country in the world in 2001. However, although access is available from across all countries of the world, the difference in quantity and quality of telecommunication services is still wide.