Introduction to the Millennium Development Goals

At the Millennium Summit in September 2000, the largest gathering of world leaders in history adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of targets, with a deadline of 2015. These have become known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2007, the MDG monitoring framework was revised to include four new targets agreed on by member states at the 2005 World Summit, namely, full and productive employment and decent work for all, access to reproductive health, access to treatment for HIV/AIDS, and protection of biodiversity. The indicators for these new targets became effective in January 2008 and this is the framework used here to monitor progress toward achieving the MDGs.

The first MDG targets the poor directly — those living on less than one dollar a day — while the next six focus on the underlying causes of poverty, such as lack of access to education, health care, and employment; gender inequality; poor housing conditions; and environmental degradation. The eighth goal is to develop a global partnership for development, and focuses on how the industrialized countries can work with the poorer countries to enhance the latter’s standard of living. The MDGs thus complement the Asian Development Bank’s vision of a region free of poverty, and its mission to help its developing member countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their citizens. Box 1 lists the eight MDGs and the corresponding targets and indicators for monitoring progress.

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*continued.*
Box 1 Millennium Development Goals (continued)

Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

6.6 Incidence and death rates associated with malaria
6.7 Proportion of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets
6.8 Proportion of children under 5 with fever who are treated with appropriate antimalarial drugs
6.9 Incidence, prevalence, and death rates associated with tuberculosis
6.10 Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Target 7.A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources

7.1 Proportion of land area covered by forest
7.2 CO₂ emissions, total, per capita, and per $1 GDP (PPP)
7.3 Consumption of ozone-depleting substances
7.4 Proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits
7.5 Proportion of total water resources used

Target 7.B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss

7.6 Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected
7.7 Proportion of species threatened with extinction

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

7.8 Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source
7.9 Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility

Target 7.D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

7.10 Proportion of urban population living in slums

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Target 8.A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system

Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally

Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the least developed countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States.

Official development assistance (ODA)

8.1 Net ODA, total and to the least developed countries, as percentage of OECD/DAC donors’ gross national income
8.2 Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation)
8.3 Proportion of bilateral official development assistance of OECD/DAC donors that is untied
8.4 ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their gross national incomes
8.5 ODA received in small island developing States as a proportion of their gross national incomes

Market access

8.6 Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and least developed countries, admitted free of duty
8.7 Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries
8.8 Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product
8.9 Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity

Debt sustainability

8.10 Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative)
8.11 Debt relief committed under HIPC and MDRI Initiatives
8.12 Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services

Target 8.B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries

Includes: tariff and quota free access for the least developed countries’ exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction

8.13 Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis

Target 8.C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)

8.14 Telephone lines per 100 population
8.15 Cellular subscribers per 100 population
8.16 Internet users per 100 population

Target 8.D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

8.17 Debt sustainability

Target 8.E: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries

8.18 Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis

Target 8.F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

8.19 Telephone lines per 100 population
8.20 Cellular subscribers per 100 population
8.21 Internet users per 100 population


1 For monitoring country poverty trends, indicators based on national poverty lines should be used, where available.

2 The actual proportion of people living in slums is measured by a proxy, represented by the urban population living in households with at least one of the four characteristics: (a) lack of access to improved water supply, (b) lack of access to improved sanitation, (c) overcrowding (three or more persons per room), and (d) dwellings made of nondurable material.
To assess progress, all indicators should be disaggregated by sex and urban and/or rural areas as far as possible. Not all indicators listed in Box 1 are available for all countries. Several new indicators were introduced in the revised monitoring framework. The accompanying tables in Part II contain the indicators currently available on a comparable basis for countries of the Asia and Pacific region.

**Progress toward Achieving the Millennium Development Goals**

The MDGs discussed in Part II are taken in order according to the classification presented in Box 1. For each goal, there is a short nontechnical write-up together with supporting statistical information in the form of figures, boxes, and tables, on the performance of countries toward achieving the goals.

To ascertain the performance of countries toward reaching the MDGs, countries are assessed according to latest available data. It is important to remember that the progress of countries is provisional and is likely to change as the 2015 target date draws closer. This is particularly relevant at the present time in view of the global economic crisis, which began in the second half of 2008.

Not all MDGs are likely to be affected to the same extent by the economic crisis. Progress toward eradicating extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1) may be particularly vulnerable because of rising unemployment and falling household incomes. Reducing child mortality (MDG 4) and improving maternal health (MDG 5) could also be affected if governments cut back on immunization campaigns, training midwives, and antenatal care, for example. On the other hand, the impact on MDGs 2 and 3—achieve universal primary education, and promote gender equality and empower women—may be less severe.

**Country Groups**

In commenting on performance made by countries toward achieving the MDGs, three groups of countries are often singled out for special mention:

(i) The five most populous countries, namely, Bangladesh, People’s Republic of China, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan, are of special interest because progress by these countries determines the progress of most of the population of the Asia and Pacific region.

(ii) The 14 Pacific countries are mostly small and isolated and they have similar difficulties in meeting their targets.

(iii) The countries of the former Soviet Union in Central and West Asia are still to some extent in transition from systems of government characterized by central planning and extensive welfare provision, to market economies in which fewer health and education services are being provided by government. As a result, they have similar experiences with each other in meeting many of the targets.

**Data Sources and Comparability with Other Publications**

The tables included in Part II contain data that have mostly been compiled by the designated international agencies for the respective MDG indicators. These data have been verified to the extent possible but responsibility for the reliability of the statistics remains with the agencies that are listed as the sources of each table.

Differences in the data and analyses of the performance of countries in meeting the goals that exist between this publication and reports from other organizations may be due to several factors, including data sources, dates when statistics were collected and published, and methodology.
Selected References