



En Route to Equality

A GENDER REVIEW OF
NATIONAL MDG REPORTS
2005



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BUREAU OF DEVELOPMENT POLICY
UNDP

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The views expressed in this report do not represent the official position of UNDP.

FOREWORD

The Millennium Declaration, adopted by the United Nations in September 2000, commits the international community and member states of the UN to the achievement of eight major developmental goals - the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**.

The MDGs have come to be acknowledged as an over-arching framework that places human rights and human poverty at the centre-stage of development policy. At the national level, the MDGs have created the opportunity for enlarging pro-poor policy choices through bringing a more integrated and holistic perspective to macroeconomic policy-making. At the global level too, the MDGs allow development partners to arrive at a consensus around aid priorities and ensure coordination among donors.

The United Nations Development Programme has been assisting developing countries to prepare national MDG reports in collaboration with other partners. These reports are important instruments for tracking and monitoring progress on the achievement of the MDGs and have enabled countries to take ownership of the Goals, which is critical to shaping their development priorities. Increasingly, national MDG reports are emerging as tools for awareness raising, advocacy, alliance building, and renewal of political commitments.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are central to the achievement of the MDGs – not only as just and desirable ends in themselves, but as vehicles for the achievement of all the other Goals. Effective mainstreaming of gender in the national MDGRs can contribute to a range of actions for gender equality, from internal policy dialogues to strengthening of national capacities and statistical systems for data collection and reporting leading to more gender-responsive programming and resource allocation.

This global review of national MDG reports is a follow-up to a pilot exercise commissioned by the Bureau of Development Policy, UNDP in 2003. A joint World Bank/UNDP conference on 'Gender and the MDGs' organised in December 2003 in partnership with the UN and the OECD/DAC gender networks, encouraged UNDP to take up the present expanded review covering 78 national MDG reports. The findings provide an additional gender dimension to the review of national reports, and demonstrate the added value of including a gender equality perspective in future reporting and tracking of progress in the implementation of the MDGs.

We hope that this report will contribute to the five year review of the MDGs in September 2005 and to UNDP's continued support to the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.



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INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is the foundation for the MDGs

‘Gender equality and empowerment of women’ – Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals - is at the core of all the MDGs, from improving health and fighting disease, to reducing poverty and mitigating hunger, expanding education and lowering child mortality, increasing access to safe water, and ensuring environmental sustainability. **Attempting to achieve the MDGs without promoting gender equality will both raise the costs and decrease the likelihood of achieving the other goals.**

Gender equality and the Millennium Development Goals

Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- *Gender equality in capabilities and access to opportunities can accelerate economic growth.*
- *Equal access for women to basic transport and energy infrastructure (such as clean cooking fuels) can lead to greater economic activity.*
- *Gender equality in farm inputs helps increase agricultural production and reduce poverty because women farmers form a significant proportion of the rural poor.*
- *Equal investment in women’s health and nutritional status reduces chronic hunger and malnourishment, which increases productivity and well-being.*

Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education

- *Educated girls and women have greater control over their fertility and participate more in public life.*
- *A mother’s education is a strong and consistent determinant of her children’s school enrolment and attainment and their health and nutrition outcomes.*

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