

# The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013



UNITED NATIONS



This report is based on a master set of data that has been compiled by an Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, in response to the wishes of the General Assembly for periodic assessment of progress towards the MDGs. The Group comprises representatives of the international organizations whose activities include the preparation of one or more of the series of statistical indicators that were identified as appropriate for monitoring progress towards the MDGs, as reflected in the list below. A number of national statisticians and outside expert advisers also contributed.

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# The Millennium Development Goals Report

## 2013



UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK, 2013







# Foreword

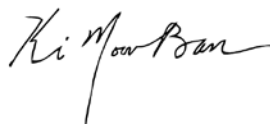
The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been the most successful global anti-poverty push in history.

Significant and substantial progress has been made in meeting many of the targets—including halving the number of people living in extreme poverty and the proportion of people without sustainable access to improved sources of drinking water. The proportion of urban slum dwellers declined significantly. Remarkable gains have been made in the fight against malaria and tuberculosis. There have been visible improvements in all health areas as well as primary education.

We are now less than 1,000 days to the 2015 target date for achieving the MDGs. This year's report looks at the areas where action is needed most. For example, one in eight people worldwide remain hungry. Too many women die in childbirth when we have the means to save them. More than 2.5 billion people lack improved sanitation facilities, of which one billion continue to practice open defecation, a major health and environmental hazard. Our resource base is in serious decline, with continuing losses of forests, species and fish stocks, in a world already experiencing the impacts of climate change.

This report also shows that the achievement of the MDGs has been uneven among and within countries. Children from poor and rural households are much more likely to be out of school than their rich and urban counterparts. Wide gaps remain in basic knowledge about HIV and its prevention among young men and women in sub-Saharan Africa, which has been hardest hit by the epidemic.

In more than a decade of experience in working towards the MDGs, we have learned that focused global development efforts can make a difference. Through accelerated action, the world can achieve the MDGs and generate momentum for an ambitious and inspiring post-2015 development framework. Now is the time to step up our efforts to build a more just, secure and sustainable future for all.



BAN KI-MOON  
Secretary-General, United Nations



# Overview

With the deadline for the MDGs on the horizon, progress can be reported in most areas, despite the impact of the global economic and financial crisis. Several important targets have or will be met by 2015, assuming continued commitment by national governments, the international community, civil society and the private sector. That said, progress in many areas is far from sufficient. Redoubled efforts are urgently needed, particularly in regions most behind to jumpstart advancement and achieve maximum gains. The world community should take pride in its accomplishments thus far, while building on existing momentum to reach as many goals as possible by 2015 and to realize gains for all.

## Several MDG targets have already been met or are within close reach

- **The proportion of people living in extreme poverty has been halved at the global level**

The world reached the poverty reduction target five years ahead of schedule. In developing regions, the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day fell from 47 per cent in 1990 to 22 per cent in 2010. About 700 million fewer people lived in conditions of extreme poverty in 2010 than in 1990.

- **Over 2 billion people gained access to improved sources of drinking water**

Over the last 21 years, more than 2.1 billion people gained access to improved drinking water sources. The proportion of the global population using such sources reached 89 per cent in 2010, up from 76 per cent in 1990. This means that the MDG drinking water target was met five years ahead of the target date, despite significant population growth.

- **Remarkable gains have been made in the fight against malaria and tuberculosis**

Between 2000 and 2010, mortality rates from malaria fell by more than 25 per cent globally. An estimated 1.1 million deaths from malaria were averted over this period. Death rates from tuberculosis at the global level and in several regions are likely to be halved by 2015, compared to 1990 levels. Between 1995 and 2011, a cumulative total of 51 million tuberculosis patients were successfully treated, saving 20 million lives.

- **The proportion of slum dwellers in the cities and metropolises of the developing world is declining**

Between 2000 and 2010, over 200 million slum dwellers benefitted from improved water sources,

sanitation facilities, durable housing or sufficient living space, thereby exceeding the 100 million MDG target. Many countries across all regions have shown remarkable progress in reducing the proportion of urban slum dwellers.

- **A low debt burden and an improved climate for trade are levelling the playing field for developing countries**

The debt service to export revenue ratio of all developing countries stood at 3.1 per cent in 2011, down from nearly 12 per cent in 2000. Their duty-free market access also improved in 2011, reaching 80 per cent of their exports. The exports of least developed countries benefitted the most. Average tariffs are also at an all-time low.

- **The hunger reduction target is within reach**

The proportion of undernourished people in developing regions decreased from 23.2 per cent in 1990–1992 to 14.9 per cent in 2010–2012. Given reinvigorated efforts, the target of halving the percentage of people suffering from hunger by 2015 appears to be within reach. Still, one in eight people in the world today remain chronically undernourished.

## Accelerated progress and bolder action are needed in many areas

- **Environmental sustainability is under severe threat, demanding a new level of global cooperation**

The growth in global emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is accelerating, and emissions today are more than 46 per cent higher than their 1990 level. Forests continue to be lost at an alarming rate. Overexploitation of marine fish stocks is resulting in diminished yields. More of the earth's land and marine areas are under protection, but birds, mammals and other species are heading for extinction at an ever faster rate, with declines in both populations and distribution.

- **Big gains have been made in child survival, but more must be done to meet our obligations to the youngest generation**

Worldwide, the mortality rate for children under five dropped by 41 per cent—from 87 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 51 in 2011. Despite this enormous accomplishment, more rapid progress is needed to meet the 2015 target of a two-thirds reduction in child deaths. Increasingly, child deaths are concentrated in the poorest regions, and in the first month of life.

- **Most maternal deaths are preventable, but progress in this area is falling short**

Globally, the maternal mortality ratio declined by 47 per cent over the last two decades, from 400 maternal

deaths per 100,000 live births to 210 between 1990 and 2010. Meeting the MDG target of reducing the ratio by three quarters will require accelerated interventions and stronger political backing for women and children.

- **Access to antiretroviral therapy and knowledge about HIV prevention must expand**

While new HIV infections are declining, an estimated 34 million people were living with HIV at the end of 2011. The MDG target of universal access to antiretroviral therapy for all who need it by 2010 was missed, but is reachable by 2015 if current trends continue. The ultimate goal is preventing the spread of HIV, but knowledge of the virus and how to avoid transmission remains unacceptably low.

- **Too many children are still denied their right to primary education**

Between 2000 and 2011, the number of children out of school declined by almost half—from 102 million to 57 million. However, progress in reducing the number of children out of school has slowed considerably over time. Stalled progress means that the world is unlikely to meet the target of universal primary education by 2015.

- **Gains in sanitation are impressive—but not good enough**

From 1990 to 2011, 1.9 billion people gained access to a latrine, flush toilet or other improved sanitation facility. Despite these accomplishments, more rapid progress is needed to meet the MDG target. Stopping open defecation and instituting the right policies are key.

- **There is less aid money overall, with the poorest countries most adversely affected**

In 2012, net aid disbursements from developed to developing countries totalled \$126 billion. This represents a 4 per cent drop in real terms compared to 2011, which itself was 2 per cent below 2010 levels. This decline affected least developed countries disproportionately. In 2012, bilateral official development assistance to these countries fell by 13 per cent, to about \$26 billion.

## Our attention needs to focus on disparities, which often stand in the way of further improvements

- **Rural-urban gaps persist—access to reproductive health services and to clean drinking water are only two examples**

In 2011, only 53 per cent of deliveries in rural areas were attended by skilled health personnel, versus 84 per cent of them in urban areas. Eighty-three per cent of the population without access to an improved drinking water source live in rural communities.

- **The poorest children are most likely to be out of school**

Children and adolescents from the poorest households are at least three times more likely to be out of school than children from the richest households. Girls are more likely to be out of school than boys among both primary and lower secondary age groups, even for girls living in the richest households.

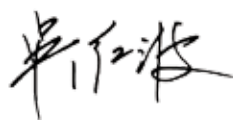
- **Gender-based inequalities in decision-making power persist**

Whether in the public or private sphere, from the highest levels of government decision-making to households, women continue to be denied equal opportunity with men to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

## Successful completion of the MDGs by 2015 must remain a global priority, creating a stable foundation for future development action

Efforts to achieve a world of prosperity, equity, freedom, dignity and peace will continue beyond 2015. The United Nations is working concertedly with governments, civil society and other partners to build on the momentum generated by the MDGs and to craft an ambitious, yet realistic, post-2015 development agenda. A successful conclusion to the MDGs will be an important building block for a successor development agenda. And volumes of experience and lessons learned along the way can only benefit the prospects for continued progress.

The analysis in this report, based on a wide range of statistics, shows that the actions of all stakeholders are coalescing in the achievement of many of the MDGs. At the same time, many items on the agenda remain incomplete. The results of this report give us a clear indication where our efforts must be directed in the days remaining before the 2015 deadline.



WU HONGBO  
Under-Secretary-General for Economic  
and Social Affairs

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