

GRF FACT Sheet on the Millennium Development Goals

On the occasion of the
UN SUMMIT 20 – 22 September New York

"We must not fail the billions who look to the international community to fulfil the promise of the Millennium Declaration for a better world. Let us meet in September to keep the promise."

- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon -

The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations

Ten years ago, from 6 to 8 September 2000 heads of state and government gathered under the official theme, "The United Nations in the 21st Century. ", at the United Nations Headquarter in New York to tackle some of the major challenges of the upcoming decades.

Based on the resolution 53/202¹ on the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations the Secretary-General, inter alia, proposed after a process of inter- and non-governmental consultation a number of forward-looking, relevant topics:

- Peace and security, including disarmament
- Development, including poverty eradication
- Human rights
- Strengthening the United Nations

So the Millennium Assembly presented the timely opportunity to identify the challenges that the UN will face in the future, to enhance and strengthen the United Nations as a unique and global institution and secondly the Millennium Summit provided the opportunity for a recommitment to the purposes and principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations. As a main outcome the 189 world leaders signed onto the so-called [Millennium Declaration](#).²

The Millennium Declaration

End poverty by 2015. This is the historic promise 189 world leaders made at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 when they signed onto the Millennium Declaration and agreed to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs are an eight-point road map with measurable targets and clear deadlines for improving the lives of the world's poorest people. World leaders have agreed to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

The eight MDG's

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the most broadly supported, comprehensive and specific development goals the world has ever agreed upon. These eight time-bound goals provide concrete, numerical benchmarks for tackling extreme poverty in its many dimensions. They include goals and targets on income poverty, hunger, maternal and child mortality, disease, inadequate shelter, gender inequality, environmental degradation and the Global Partnership for Development.

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Reduce between 1990 and 2015 by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day

- Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people
- Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

- Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

- Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

- Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio
- Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health

Goal 6: Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it
- Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources
- Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss
- Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
- Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

- Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system
- Address the special needs of the least developed countries.
- Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States
- Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries³

Progress

There has been remarkable progress on some MDGs in many countries. Extreme poverty decreased from 1.8 billion in 1990 to 1.4 billion in 2005. Enrolment in primary education is at 89%, up from 82% in 1999. If current trends continue, 86% of people in developing regions will have access to clean water in 2015. However, progress has been highly uneven among regions, countries and population groups. Some targets are also globally off-track: It is estimated that in 2009 more than 1 billion people suffered from hunger. Maternal mortality is not decreasing nearly fast enough to meet the target for 2015 and

the number of people living with HIV worldwide continues to grow. In sub-Saharan Africa no country is currently on course to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

While the share of people is declining, the absolute number of the poor in South Asia and in sub-Saharan Africa is increasing.

The impact of the international financial and economic crisis in combination with high food prices is threatening the MDG progress. Sustained poverty and hunger reduction is at risk because of vulnerability to climate change, particularly in the area of agricultural production. Without substantial international support, several of the Goals are likely to be missed in many developing countries by 2015. The financial and economic crisis, the worst since the Great Depression, it has reversed development gains in many developing countries and threatens to seriously undermine the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

There are deeply inspiring examples of progress made by countries in all regions of the world through cooperation, partnerships, actions and solidarity, although the number of people living in extreme poverty and hunger surpasses 1 billion and inequalities between and within countries remain a significant challenge. Maternal and child mortality are still on an alarming global level. They will affirm that eradication of poverty and hunger, as well as combating inequality at all levels, is essential to create a more prosperous and sustainable future for all.

Climate change poses serious risks and challenges to all countries, especially developing countries. Addressing climate change will be of key importance in safeguarding and advancing progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Disaster risk reduction and increasing resilience to all types of natural hazard, in developing countries, in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, can have multiplier effects and accelerate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Reducing vulnerabilities to these hazards is therefore a high priority for developing countries.

Policies and actions must focus on the poor and those living in the most vulnerable situations, including persons with disabilities, so that they benefit from progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. There is a particular need to provide more equitable access to economic opportunities and social services.

Least developed countries face significant constraints and structural impediments in their development efforts. The least developed countries are lagging behind in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. More attention should be given in particular to Africa, especially those countries most off track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.⁶

Progress towards the MDGs is measured through 21 targets and [60 official indicators](#). Most of the MDG targets have a deadline of 2015, and 1990 is the baseline against which progress is gauged.

The UN Review Summit on the MDGs

With only five years left until the 2015 deadline to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called on world leaders to attend a summit in New York on 20-22 September to accelerate progress towards the MDGs.

Coming amid mixed progress and new crises that threaten the global effort to halve extreme poverty, “the summit will be a crucially important opportunity to redouble our efforts to meet the Goals,” he said, referring to the targets adopted at the UN Millennium Summit of 2000, aimed at slashing poverty, hunger, disease, maternal and child deaths and other ills by a 2015 deadline.

World leaders will reaffirm the promises made in the [Millennium Declaration](#) and will continue to be guided by the [United Nations Charter](#), recognizing that progress, including on poverty eradication, is being made despite setbacks.

Expected outcomes

The Millennium Development Goals are still attainable. The question today is how to transform the pace of change from the lessons learned in the past 10 years into dramatically faster progress?

The MDG Summit shall focus on accelerating progress towards the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, taking into account the progress made with regard to the internationally agreed development goals, through a comprehensive review of successes, best practices and lessons learned, obstacles and gaps, challenges and opportunities, leading to concrete strategies for action.

The September Review Summit shall lead to a concrete [action agenda](#) to turn the MDGs into Millennium Development Achievements.

Lessons learned and successful policies and approaches in the implementation and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals could be replicated and scaled up for accelerating progress, with increased political commitment.

GRF Davos and the MDGs

Disaster risk reduction and resilience building are key success factors to achieve the MDGs.

For further information read [GRF Davos' Position Paper on the United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals](#).

References

The information provided in this fact sheet on the Millennium Development Goals is based on the information provided by the United Nations:

¹ 55/2. United Nations Millennium Declaration- The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations

² United Nations reform: measures and proposals: The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations: Thematic framework for the Millennium Summit - Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations A/53/948

³ Fast Facts United Nations Development Programme: The Millennium Development Goals

⁴ The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010, United Nations

⁵ What will it take to achieve the Millennium Development Goals? - An international Assessment report. June 2010 – UNDP

⁶ Draft outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals. United Nations.