



The Johannesburg Statement on the Millennium Development Goals

We live in an age of unprecedented global connections and recognition of a global responsibility for the conditions of all humans living on our planet. Persisting pockets of debilitating poverty and deep deprivations degrade the lives of hundreds of millions, diminish all, threaten social cohesion, political stability and international order, and are an indictment of governments and international institutions.

The United Nations exists to bring about a safer world and a better life for all. It has unique legitimacy and unmatched convening power, based on universal membership. It is the forum of choice for promoting global norms and setting the global agenda. In 2000 world leaders signed the historic Millennium Declaration from which eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were derived. The leaders accepted individual and collective responsibility to reduce poverty in their own countries and globally.

The MDGs captured the normative consensus on the nature and meaning of development and articulated measurable and timetabled indicators. They corrected the skewed focus on markets and stabilization, redirecting attention and efforts towards the reduction of poverty and the promotion of human development. They served as a powerful tool for mobilising governments, the UN system and civil society.

Substantial progress has been recorded in many places. This includes primary education and greater gender equality in education in Africa, investment in social sectors, a renewed commitment to aid, gains in life expectancy, reduced income poverty in two-thirds of the countries of the world and a decline in conflicts.

However, gains have been uneven and performance to date has fallen short of the ambitious targets. Inequality has widened within and among countries. HIV prevalence remains critically high in southern Africa, threatening the achievement of many MDGs. Chronic hunger, child malnutrition, and maternal and infant mortality rates are distressingly and unacceptably high. Unemployment, especially among the young, is stubbornly persistent.

The goals did not include reference to macro-economic development. While social infrastructure grew, in many countries this was at the cost of economic infrastructure. Aid did not reach pledged commitments nor always conform with the national priorities of recipient countries. There was insufficient progress towards national adaptation of the goals. As a result 'local ownership' has been little more than a slogan. The eighth goal – on building an international partnership for development – lacked accompanying tight indicators to measure progress.

New issues and concerns have emerged in the decade since 2000. Of overwhelming importance is climate change and the accompanying desertification and rising incidence of natural disasters, from which the poor suffer most. Associated issues of water scarcity, food availability and affordability present looming problems. The global financial crisis shook the foundations of the former neoliberal consensus. The dramatic rise of new powers as southern engines of growth has provided alternative models of growth, development and South–South co-operation and changed the discourse on the best terms of engagement with the international economy.

The experience since 2000 has shown the value of the goals, particularly a global commitment to worldwide poverty reduction in the medium term and the aim of achieving poverty eradication in the long term. The deadline is close but there remains some time to improve MDG performance through accelerated efforts. Review of performance since 2000 suggests two immediate priorities: (i) reducing maternal mortality which cuts many lives tragically short and debilitates families; and (ii) calling on governments, in rich and poor countries, and international institutions to take responsibility for failures.

We need also to initiate a new process leading to the formulation of global goals in 2015 and international commitment to them. The world needs to start a new process of consultation and discussions urgently, leading to the formulation of a new set of goals to be adopted in 2015. These would: (i) build on the MDGs; (ii) modify the goals chosen; (iii) reflect the new problems; and (iv) address pressing new global concerns.

This process will need to include the participation of the poorest and most excluded, civil society and governments. Ultimately it must be the United Nations that agrees on the chosen goals and is responsible for convening representatives of the nations of the world to that end. The UN should take responsibility for initiating worldwide consultations so that the goals are formulated by the governments which will commit themselves to fulfilling them, and by the people most affected by them.

To consolidate and build on the undoubted successes of the MDGs, it is important that development advocates, agencies and partners begin a conversation immediately on a new policy framework for national development and global poverty reduction beyond 2015.

Accordingly, we urge the United Nations to begin preparations now for convening a summit in 2015 to adopt a new set of Global Development Goals (GDGs), with particular emphasis on gender parity and voice for the poorest and the marginalised. We recommend that, in the process of the consultations, a new set of goals be articulated, comprising measurable targets and indicators, while confronting the shortfalls and gaps in MDG achievements.

Particular considerations that could be included in these consultations are:

- Promoting **national ownership** by: (i) adapting the goals to national circumstances and priorities; (ii) creating mechanisms whereby external aid conforms to priority needs

identified in national development plans prepared by the countries themselves; and (iii) putting in place financial aid and technical assistance to strengthen the analytical, policy development and programme delivery capacity of target countries.

- Ensuring **equitable economic growth**.
- **Resetting the balance** between the productive sectors of the economy and the social sectors of the nation.
- Incorporating **climate change** and the need for mitigation and adaptation.
- Paying special attention to **food availability and affordability**.
- Including the need to **reduce inequalities** between individuals and groups within and among countries.
- Reformulating specific goals to **reflect progress**, such as a shift in priority from primary education to the attainment of universal literacy through completed secondary education qualifications.
- Ensuring that the **rights** of all vulnerable and minority groups are enacted in legislation and enforced.
- Establishing conditions to enable women to lead lives **free from the threat of violence** and with equal opportunities for realising their wellbeing.
- Adopting a more rigorous set of **reporting, monitoring and accountability** mechanisms for developing country efforts and results, donor pledges and the performance of international institutions.

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