HOUSE OF LORDS
Library Note

Debate on 22 November: Successor Framework to the Millennium Development Goals

This Library Note provides background reading for the debate to be held on Thursday 22 November on:

"progress towards the successor framework to the Millennium Development Goals"

It provides information on the existing Millennium Development Goals framework, and progress towards achieving the Goals by 2015, before looking at proposals and issues surrounding a successor framework after 2015.

Ian Cruse
19 November 2012
LLN 2012/039

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals that were officially established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000 and the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration by 189 member states.[1] The MDGs were developed out of the eight chapters of the Declaration. Progress is tracked against 21 targets and 60 indicators. The eight goals are: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality rates; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; developing a global partnership for development. The 21 targets associated with these goals are set out in the Appendix of this Note. The MDGs and the majority of the targets associated with them are due to be met in 2015. As 2015 approaches, work has begun, much of it through the auspices of the UN, to map out a new development agenda. This Note considers progress to date and prospects for reaching the MDGs and hitting the accompanying targets. It then covers the debate regarding the post-2015 agenda, the process which is governing it, and some of the key themes which are emerging from it. It also mentions the Rio+20 Conference and work on a series of sustainable development goals (SDGs) and how this lines up with the current MDGs and a new development framework. Further background relating to the emergence of the MDGs and subsequent monitoring of progress until 2010, including the role of the UK, can be found in House of Lords Library Note, *Debate on 1st May: Millennium Development Goals*, (April 2008) and House of Commons Library Standard Note, *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the September 2010 UN Review Summit*, (June 2010).[2]

2. Progress on Reaching the Current MDGs

2.1 United Nations Assessment

In June 2012, the UN published *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012*. It noted progress in a number of areas:

> **Extreme poverty is falling in every region**. For the first time since poverty trends began to be monitored, the number of people living in extreme poverty and poverty rates fell in every developing region—including in sub-Saharan Africa, where rates are highest. The proportion of people living on less than $1.25 a day fell from 47 percent in 1990 to 24 percent in 2008—a reduction from over 2 billion to less than 1.4 billion.
>
> **The poverty reduction target was met**. Preliminary estimates indicate that the global poverty rate at $1.25 a day fell in 2010 to less than half the 1990 rate. If these results are confirmed, the first target of the MDGs— cutting the extreme poverty rate to half its 1990 level—will have been achieved at the global level well ahead of 2015.

---

[1] See: UN Press Release GA/9758, *World Leaders Adopt 'United Nations Millennium Declaration' at Conclusion of Extraordinary Three-day Summit*, (8 September 2000).
[2] For further reading see: Richard Black and Howard White (eds), *Targeting Development: Critical Perspectives on the Millennium Development Goals*, (2006); Professor Mark McGillivray (ed), *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*, (2008). The World Bank hosts a variety of reports on the MDGs, including its annual Global Monitoring Reports.

The world has met the target of halving the proportion of people without access to improved sources of water. The target of halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water was also met by 2010, with the proportion of people using an improved water source rising from 76 percent in 1990 to 89 percent in 2010. Between 1990 and 2010, over two billion people gained access to improved drinking water sources, such as piped supplies and protected wells.

Improvements in the lives of 200 million slum dwellers exceeded the slum target. The share of urban residents in the developing world living in slums declined from 39 percent in 2000 to 33 percent in 2012. More than 200 million gained access to either improved water sources, improved sanitation facilities, or durable or less crowded housing. This achievement exceeds the target of significantly improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, well ahead of the 2020 deadline.

The world has achieved parity in primary education between girls and boys. Driven by national and international efforts and the MDG campaign, many more of the world's children are enrolled in school at the primary level, especially since 2000. Girls have benefited the most. The ratio between the enrolment rate of girls and that of boys grew from 91 in 1999 to 97 in 2010 for all developing regions. The gender parity index value of 97 falls within the plus-or-minus 3-point margin of 100 percent, the accepted measure for parity.

Many countries facing the greatest challenges have made significant progress towards universal primary education. Enrolment rates of children of primary school age increased markedly in sub-Saharan Africa, from 58 to 76 percent between 1999 and 2010. Many countries in that region succeeded in reducing their relatively high out-of-school rates even as their primary school age populations were growing.

Child survival progress is gaining momentum. Despite population growth, the number of under-five deaths worldwide fell from more than 12.0 million in 1990 to 7.6 million in 2010. And progress in the developing world as a whole has accelerated. Sub-Saharan Africa—the region with the highest level of under-five mortality—has doubled its average rate of reduction, from 1.2 percent a year over 1990-2000 to 2.4 percent during 2000-2010.

Access to treatment for people living with HIV increased in all regions. At the end of 2010, 6.5 million people were receiving antiretroviral therapy for HIV or AIDS in developing regions. This total constitutes an increase of over 1.4 million people from December 2009, and the largest one-year increase ever. The 2010 target of universal access, however, was not reached.

The world is on track to achieve the target of halting and beginning to reverse the spread of tuberculosis. Globally, tuberculosis incidence rates have been falling since 2002, and current projections suggest that the 1990 death rate from the disease will be halved by 2015.

Global malaria deaths have declined. The estimated incidence of malaria has decreased globally, by 17 percent since 2000. Over the same period, malaria-specific mortality rates have decreased by 25 percent. Reported malaria cases

fell by more than 50 percent between 2000 and 2010 in 43 of the 99 countries with ongoing malaria transmission.[3]

However, it also drew attention to problems in other areas and potential dangers to existing progress:

Vulnerable employment has decreased only marginally over twenty years. Vulnerable employment—defined as the share of unpaid family workers and own-account workers in total employment—accounted for an estimated 58 percent of all employment in developing regions in 2011, down only moderately from 67 percent two decades earlier. Women and youth are more likely to find themselves in such insecure and poorly remunerated positions than the rest of the employed population.

Decreases in maternal mortality are far from the 2015 target. There have been important improvements in maternal health and reduction in maternal deaths, but progress is still slow. Reductions in adolescent childbearing and expansion of contraceptive use have continued, but at a slower pace since 2000 than over the decade before.

Use of improved sources of water remains lower in rural areas. While 19 percent of the rural population used unimproved sources of water in 2010, the rate in urban areas was only 4 percent. And since dimensions of safety, reliability and sustainability are not reflected in the proxy indicator used to track progress towards the MDG target, it is likely that these figures overestimate the actual number of people using safe water supplies. Worse, nearly half of the population in developing regions—2.5 billion—still lacks access to improved sanitation facilities. By 2015, the world will have reached only 67 percent coverage, well short of the 75 percent needed to achieve the MDG target.

Hunger remains a global challenge. The most recent FAO estimates of undernourishment set the mark at 850 million living in hunger in the world in the 2006/2008 period—15.5 percent of the world population. This continuing high level reflects the lack of progress on hunger in several regions, even as income poverty has decreased. Progress has also been slow in reducing child undernutrition. Close to one third of children in Southern Asia were underweight in 2010.

The number of people living in slums continues to grow. Despite a reduction in the share of urban populations living in slums, the absolute number has continued to grow from a 1990 baseline of 650 million. An estimated 863 million people now live in slum conditions.[4]

The report included a dashboard indicating progress across all the MDGs, targets and indicators. This dashboard is reproduced in the Appendix of this Note. The World Bank has also helped to produce an interactive Atlas using the latest data sets, which allows a comparison across regions and countries for each MDG and its related targets.

---

[3] UN, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012*, (June 2012) p 4.
[4] ibid p 5. See also Delfin S Go and José Alejandro Quijada, 'The Odds of Achieving the MDGs', *The World Bank Research Observer*, vol 27, (July 2012), pp 143–84.

The UN has acknowledged that while the MDGs have a number of strengths, they also have a number of strategic weaknesses. In a discussion paper produced by the UN System Task Team, *Review of the Contributions of the MDG Agenda to Foster Development: Lessons for the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda*, strengths and weaknesses were compared to provide insights post-2015:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Key Conceptualisation and Characteristics of the MDG Framework	
The integrated framework influenced policies by giving priority and operational meaning to various dimensions of human development; Simple, transparent and easy-to communicate framework; It provided the basis for converging advocacy, thereby helping to strengthen the global partnership for development and directing global and national resources towards poverty reduction and human development; It recognized the special needs of Africa and LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and strengthened international commitments to address those needs.	Lack of consultations at its conception to build ownership led to the perception of a donor-centric agenda; Excluded some important issues embodied in the Millennium Declaration; Inadequate incorporation of other important issues, such as environmental sustainability, productive employment and decent work, inequality; Limited consideration of the enablers of development; Failure to account for differences in initial conditions.
Format of the MDG Framework	
Clear definition of goals, targets and indicators helped improve policy monitoring and accountability; Supported the development of countries' statistical capacity and the use of robust data in support of development policies; Improved statistical system coordination at national and international levels.	Imprecise quantitative targets were set for some dimensions, such as for reducing the number of slum-dwellers and several targets related to MDG-8; Failure to account for population dynamics; Perception of a top-down exercise (from the international to the national statistical systems); Lack of clarity on how to tailor global targets to national realities and regional dynamics, among others; Lack of attention to disaggregated monitor progress among vulnerable groups, qualitative aspects, and interdependencies across the MDGs.

Strengths	Weaknesses
MDG Implementation	
MDG framework promoted concrete actions to address human development shortfalls and the goals and targets were made explicit in national development policies; Provided a common framework and an improved coordination opportunity for development actors; Facilitated various forms of intra-regional cooperation; Some countries tailored the MDG framework to reflect their own realities, including adding relevant goals, targets and indicators and using disaggregated data across regions and vulnerable groups.	MDGs influenced the setting of rather rigid national policy agendas, following international benchmarks, rather than local conditions and often ignoring the complexities of the development process; Policies and programmes did not consider the synergies between achieving the different goals and targets; The way in which "on-track" and "off-track" progress was measured failed to adequately account for considerable progress made by countries with low initial levels of human development (especially in Africa); In the global debate, the MDGs led to overemphasizing financial resource gaps to the detriment of attention for institutional building and structural transformations.

2.2 Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

In October 2012, the ODI published *Post-2015: The Road Ahead*. It stated that globally there has been progress towards all of the seven key MDGs (income poverty, primary completion, gender equality in education, nutrition, child mortality, maternal mortality, and water) and that for three of these (income poverty, gender parity in primary education and water), progress has been sufficient that the targets set in 2002 for achievement by 2015 were likely to be met at a global level. Three would be nearly met (nutrition, primary completion and child mortality) while just one (maternal mortality) was lagging very far behind the target.[5] However, the report went on to give a number of caveats. For instance, it highlighted the fact that the MDGs did not incentivise a particular focus on the poorest or the hardest to reach. Thus, targets expressed as national averages "can mask sometimes quite large inequalities within countries" and in some cases, "progress could be concentrated among the better-off in a given country". Progress within and between different countries had also been measured relatively and not in absolute terms, often reflecting different starting points.[6]

2.3 World Bank and IMF: MDGs and High Food Prices

In April 2012, the World Bank and the IMF published *Global Monitoring Report 2012: Food Prices, Nutrition, and the Millennium Development Goals*. It said that despite progress across some MDGs, recent spikes in international food prices had stalled progress across several others. Higher food prices had raised the poverty headcount in most developing countries. The food price spike of 2010/11 was estimated to have prevented 48.6 million from escaping poverty in the short-run, though in the medium to long term farmers and rural households were likely to benefit and escape extreme poverty. Higher food prices had also increased undernourishment. As a result, progress

---

[5] ODI, *Post-2015: The Road Ahead*, (October 2012), p 4.
[6] ibid, pp 4–5.

in relation to child mortality (MDG 4) and maternal mortality (MDG 5) was lagging, with 105 countries of the 144 monitored not expected to reach MDG 4, and 94 off track on MDG 5. Urban, non-farm, and female headed households were most affected in the short term by higher food prices.

2.4 OECD

In April 2012, the OECD published *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: More Money or Better Policies (or Both)?* It sought to explore how much further there was to go to meet the MDGs, in terms of cost and approach. It estimated that the financial cost of meeting the MDGs related to poverty, education and health was in the order of US$120 billion, which implied the need for a tripling of the current level of country programmable aid (ie the portion of aid that actually goes from OECD countries to partner countries). It concluded that aid was unlikely to rise to meet this funding gap by 2015 and that countries would need to find new sources of funding and make better use of existing ones. This would mean that tax collection, public expenditure and the investment would have to continue to improve in developing countries alongside targeted cash transfers and spending, provided that there was a political will to tackle social inequalities.[7]

2.5 Impact of the Financial and Economic Crises on the MDGs

Michael Chibba, in an article published in *Development Policy Review* in 2011, argued that the MDGs had been adversely affected by the dual financial and economic crisis that occurred after 2008:

> ... with the exception of large emerging market economies (EMEs) and a few relatively small states (such as Kenya and Uganda), the crisis has resulted in many developing countries experiencing significantly reduced access to finance, decreased foreign direct investment, higher unemployment rates, lower or 'frozen' levels of foreign assistance, and reduced levels of remittances from workers overseas. Indeed, the perceived successes, failures, strengths and weaknesses in the pursuit of the MDGs have worsened in many developing countries.

He noted that the World Bank had estimated that the crisis-related growth slowdown in developing countries implied that there were an estimated 55 to 90 million more extremely poor people in 2009—living on less than $1.25 a day—than before the crisis. The impact of the crisis was also severe with respect to tackling hunger, with a number of organisations, such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and others referring to food-malnutrition-hunger problems of developing countries as the 'third crisis'. It was also having a negative impact on the other MDGs.[8]

3. Regional Progress in Achieving the MDGs

3.1 Progress in Africa

In 2012, the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union, the African Development Bank Group and the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) published *Assessing Progress in Africa toward the Millennium Development Goals, 2012*, its annual assessment of progress. It highlighted various achievements. Africa had

---

[7] See also: OECD, *Can We Still Achieve the Millennium Development Goals?: From Costs to Policies*, (April 2012).
[8] Michael Chibba, 'The Millennium Development Goals: Key Current Issues and Challenges', *Development Policy Review*, vol 29 no 1, (2011), pp 76–7.

sustained progress toward several MDGs and was on track to achieve the targets of: universal primary education; gender parity at all levels of education; lower HIV/AIDS prevalence among 15–24 year olds; increased proportion of the population with access to antiretroviral drugs; and an increased proportion of seats held by women in national parliament by 2015. However, it noted that more needed to be done. It pointed to continuing sub-standard quality and unequal distribution in the delivery of social services between rural and urban areas. It suggested that economic growth had yet to translate into new and adequate employment opportunities for Africa's youthful and rapidly growing population, and social protection systems which could grow the resilience and capabilities of poor and vulnerable households. It also warned that high rates of population growth could strain countries' ability to deliver vital public services and undercut progress. Africa had to exploit a 'demographic dividend' which could help drive growth, innovation, and provide a clear competitive advantage. There was also a need to ensure that progress could be monitored by timely and reliable data, and objective and effective monitoring and evaluation systems. African countries therefore, with the support of development partners, needed to strengthen statistical monitoring and evaluation capacities to track MDG progress.[9] It published a table which summarised progress across seven of the eight MDGs:

Goals and Targets (from the Millennium Declaration	Status	Remarks
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Off track	• $1.25-a-day poverty in Africa (excluding North Africa) declined from 56.5 percent to 47.5 percent during 1990–2008
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	On track: net enrolment	• Average enrolment exceeds 80 percent • Issues of quality remain • Most countries are not expected to meet the completion target
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	On track	• Good progress at primary level but weak parity at secondary and tertiary levels of education • High representation in parliament
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	Off track	• Declining, but slowly
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	Off track	• Declining, but slowly
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	Off track	• HIV/AIDS on the decline, especially in Southern Africa, due to behavioural change and access to antiretroviral therapy
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	On track: improved water supply	• Few countries have reforestation plans • Emissions minimal for most countries with little increase • Most countries reduced consumption of ozone depleting substances by more than 50 percent

---

[9] Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union, the African Development Bank Group and the UNDP, *Assessing Progress in Africa toward the Millennium Development Goals*, *2012*, (2012), pp x–xi. The UNDP website hosts MDG progress reports on individual African countries.

3.2 Progress in Asia and the Pacific

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Asian Development Bank and the UNDP in their report, *Accelerating Equitable Achievement of the MDGs: Closing the Gaps in Health and Nutrition in Asia and the Pacific*, published in February 2012, noted inconsistencies. The Asia-Pacific region had made big gains in reducing poverty and was moving fast towards other development goals, but still had high levels of hunger as well as child and maternal mortality. It had achieved some other MDG indicators ahead of the target year of 2015, including promoting gender equality in education, reducing HIV prevalence, stopping the spread of tuberculosis, increasing forest cover, reducing consumption of ozone-depleting substances and halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water. However, while strong economic dynamism had driven regional success in poverty reduction, even fast growing countries continued to lose large numbers of children before their fifth birthday and thousands of mothers died unnecessarily giving birth. Over three million children died before their fifth birthday in 2010 alone. The report also revealed striking disparities between and within sub-regions, countries and even social groups in their progress towards MDGs. While South Asia as a whole was on track for just nine MDG indicators, Sri Lanka was on track for 15 indicators and outperformed the sub-region. Within countries disparities between men and women, between social and ethnic groups and between regions were still holding large sections of the population back.[10]

3.3 Progress in Latin America and the Caribbean

In August 2010, the UNDP published *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals with Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean: Progress and Challenges*. It argued that a significant part of the progress made by the region as a whole in advancing towards the MDGs, particularly with regard to reducing extreme poverty, took place in the six years prior to the global crisis (2002–08). During that time, Latin America and the Caribbean had relatively high growth rates, with several countries improving income distribution, raising per capita social public expenditures and applying macroeconomic policies that avoided a harsher impact of the crisis. However, although some countries had attained several of the targets and others were en route to doing so, several countries would have difficulties in achieving full compliance if they continued at the same rate of progress observed so far to 2015. The report emphasised a rights perspective and the reduction of gender, ethnic, socio-economic and territorial inequalities. With regard to the target of achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, the report noted that from 1990 to 2008, the indicators had evolved relatively well, although the low productivity growth and structural heterogeneity in the region had impeded real wages and income distribution from improving sustainably.[11]

3.4 Progress in Arab States

In December 2010, the UN and the League of Arab States published *The Third Arab Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises*. Arab countries were on track to halving the proportion of people living below $1.25 a day. On universal primary education, the Arab region had seen improvement in net enrolment rates, literacy rate of young adults aged 15–24 and gender parity in primary schooling. However, women's economic and political participation remained very limited in the Arab region. Under-five mortality rates had declined by half in the Arab region over the period 1990–2008, though there were great variations in reducing maternal mortality rates among countries of the region—ranging from levels below 10 per 100,000 live births in some Gulf countries to around 1,600 per

---

[10] The UNDP website hosts progress reports for individual countries in Asia and the Pacific.
[11] The UNDP website hosts progress reports for specific Latin American and Caribbean countries.

100,000 in Somalia. The Arab region as a whole only contributed less than 5 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions, but the impacts of climate change on the region were of major concern to policy makers who recognized that the Arab region would be negatively impacted by climate change. The Arab region continued to be characterised by sharp disparities between the different sub-regions, particularly between the high-income countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). While the GCC countries were on-track to achieving most of the MDG targets, the Arab LDCs, most of which suffered from conflict, together with Iraq and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, lagged significantly behind, making it unlikely that they would meet the majority of the targets by 2015.[12]

3.5 Progress in Europe and Central Asia

In August 2012, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) published *On Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Europe and Central Asia*. The report reached a number of conclusions. Firstly, MDG performance had continued to be highly uneven in the region's emerging economies. On the one hand a group of middle and upper middle-income countries, mainly the new EU member States from Central Europe and EU candidate countries from South-Eastern Europe, had eliminated extreme poverty to a large extent and were likely to achieve most MDG objectives. On the other hand, a second group, mainly the lower middle and low income countries from Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia as well as the relatively less advanced transition economies of South-Eastern Europe, characterised by a more or less delayed economic and political transition, had been less successful in pursuit of the MDGs. Secondly, the economic crisis and recession had continued to have a strong negative effect on the achievement of the MDGs in most countries of emerging Europe and Central Asia. Higher unemployment and/or lower incomes had forced households to economise not only on luxuries and conveniences but also on necessities. This adjustment had been especially regressive in the health sector because governments in a number of countries had reduced public spending or restricted access in this area while low-income families had cut out-of-pocket expenditures on medical care and pharmaceutical products. Only a handful of countries had attempted to compensate the poor for reduced access to healthcare. However, education expenditure, both public and private, had been better protected. Finally, the report highlighted that marginalised groups had been hit harder by unemployment, income losses and reduced accessibility of health services than the majority population. Such groups included disadvantaged ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and migrants. It suggested that MDG progress could be accelerated at minimal cost if the social and economic policies of governments focused on improving the living standards of those disadvantaged groups.

4. Development Agenda Beyond 2015

4.1 UN and the Post-2015 Agenda

By June 2011, though there had been no formal discussion within the UN on what would happen after 2015, when many of the MDG targets were due to be met, debate had begun in the form of academic writings and discussion papers as well as internal workshops and seminars among civil society, academia, donor agencies, and other

---

[12] The UNDP website hosts progress reports for specific Arab countries.

interested parties.[13] In July 2011, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, published *Accelerating Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals: Options for Sustained and Inclusive Growth and Issues for Advancing the United Nations Development Agenda Beyond 2015*. The report noted MDG achievements but also those areas where more needed to be done. It stated that the MDGs would still be relevant after 2015, because even though many of the targets associated with the MDGs might be met, more progress was still needed to meet the goals themselves. For instance, one of the targets for 2015 was to halve extreme poverty and hunger, while MDG 1 aimed to eradicate it. The report also stated that though the MDGs drew on the Millennium Declaration they were not identical and that the six fundamental values that underpinned the Declaration would remain relevant: individual freedoms for democratic and participatory governance; equality among nations and individuals; solidarity to manage global challenges based on equity and social justice; tolerance of belief, cultural and language diversity; respect for nature for sustainable development; shared responsibility to manage worldwide economic and social development. Similarly, the broad objectives that flowed from these values in the Declaration would also remain pertinent: peace, security and disarmament; development and poverty eradication; environmental protection; human rights, democracy and good governance; protection to vulnerable populations; consideration for the special needs of Africa and the need to strengthen the United Nations. The report stressed the need for sustainability to be at the heart of the new development agenda and for a consideration of whether the MDGs needed to be broadened or accelerated in the context of new and emerging challenges, such as food price rises and global financial crises. It suggested a framework based around "equality", "respect for nature", "solidarity", "freedoms", "tolerance" and "shared responsibility".

In September 2011, the United Nations Secretary-General established a UN System Task Team to support UN system-wide preparations for the post-2015 UN development agenda, in consultation with all stakeholders. The Task Team is co-chaired by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and brings together senior experts from over 50 UN entities and international organizations to provide system-wide support to the post-2015 consultation process, including analytical input, expertise and outreach. The UN Task Team has published a range of publications on various aspects of the development agenda.[14]

In June 2012, the UN System Task Team published *Realizing the Future We Want for All*, which sought to outline key issues and principles that might help inform future discussions. It set the backdrop to the post-2015 agenda debate. It noted that there had been progress in poverty reduction, but that inequalities still persisted, especially in respect of gender. Such trends were also affected by demographic changes, which suggested a growing and ageing population, that was putting pressures on pensions, social systems and food production, which it was estimated would have to double if demand was to be met. Migration, both South-to-North and South-to South, and urbanisation were also presenting challenges, in terms of food and energy demand, housing, social protection and deforestation. Other problems included growing environmental footprints, insecurity, due to natural disasters and conflicts, and deficits in governance and accountability. It recommended that any new development framework should be built on a vision of the future based on the core values of human rights, equality and sustainability. It advocated an agenda format based on concrete end goals and targets, which had been one of the key strengths of the MDG framework. Such goals

---

[13] See: UN website.
[14] These include general background papers and a series of thematic reports on issues such as health, education, human rights and governance.

and targets needed to be reorganized along four key dimensions of a more holistic approach: (1) inclusive social development; (2) inclusive economic development; (3) environmental sustainability; and (4) peace and security. This focused approach was more consistent with the principles of the Millennium Declaration and would also acknowledge the importance of sustainable development. In order to allow a high degree of policy coherence at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels, the Report suggested that a core set of "development enablers" could be used as a guide, without making the post-2015 UN development agenda prescriptive. This recognized that one size did not fit all and that the agenda should leave ample space for national policy design and adaptation to local settings, whilst being guided by an overall vision and its underlying principles.

On 9 May 2012, the United Nations Secretary-General announced that he was to appoint a High Level Panel of Eminent Persons to advise on the post-2015 development agenda and that President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and Prime Minister David Cameron had agreed to serve as co-chairs.[15] On 31 July 2012, the United Nations Secretary-General announced a further 26 members who would serve on the High Level Panel. The Panel would seek to produce recommendations regarding the vision and shape of a Post-2015 development agenda. This would "help respond to the global challenges of the 21st century, building on the MDGs and with a view to ending poverty". They would be based on "strengthened accountability mechanisms" and around "the three dimensions of economic growth, social equality and environmental sustainability; taking into account the particular challenges of countries in conflict and post-conflict situations".[16] On 9 August 2012, the Secretary-General also announced that Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute and Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on the MDGs, would lead a new Sustainable Development Solutions Network, which would include business, civil society, UN agencies and other international organizations to identify and share the best pathways to achieve sustainable development post 2015.[17]

A three year timetable for the inter-governmental processes relevant to the post-2015 UN development agenda preparations is contained in Annex 3 of *Realizing the Future We Want for All*.

4.2 European Commission and the Post-2015 Agenda

In June 2012, the European Commission published a public consultation document, *Towards a Post-2015 Development Framework*, which seeks to inform the preparation of an EU contribution to the UN process. The document noted that the MDGs had been powerful in catalysing political momentum for development and instrumental in supporting an increase in Official Development Assistance (ODA) after a period of decline following the end of the Cold War. It had put the global spotlight on poverty eradication as the central objective of development cooperation and made it an important objective of international relations in general. The MDGs had also been key priorities of EU development policy since their inception in 2000. However, the MDGs also had weaknesses. Firstly, most of the MDGs were based on desired social outcomes (such as poverty and hunger eradication, health, education, gender), while issues such as growth and quality jobs, equity and social protection, governance and human rights, conflict and fragility, population dynamics or environment and climate change in eradicating poverty

---

[15] UN Press Statement, *Secretary-General's Briefing at Informal Meeting of the General Assembly*, (9 May 2012).
[16] See: UN Press Release, *UN Secretary-General Appoints High-level Panel on Post-2015 Development Agenda*, (July 2013) for a full list of the 26 Member Panel and for its remit.
[17] See: UN Press Release, *United Nations Secretary-General Announces New Sustainable Development Initiative*, (August 2012).

and hunger, might not have been emphasised sufficiently. Secondly, the MDG indicators were monitored using country averages and often hid growing inequalities within countries, between regions and groups of the population, and between women and men. Thirdly, it had sometimes been difficult to translate the global goals into specific national targets and hence into national programmes of action and there had been criticism of a donor-driven approach. At country level, there was no real certainty that the MDGs had transformed policies deeply.

The document then sought views on the desirability of a post-2015 development framework by mapping out advantages and disadvantages. Such a framework could give a positive signal that the international community was coming together as one to solve some of the global challenges, which could lead to a real partnership of nations and a new vision of the future of international cooperation. It could also involve all countries (developed, developing, emerging) and all actors (traditional and new donors, developing country governments, the private sector, NGOs, social partners, etc.) in a coherent and inclusive process where responsibility was shared. This could therefore go beyond the current concept of public action and aid. A framework could also provide a more comprehensive approach to poverty eradication, placing it in a broader political and economic context, and in particular could better encompass the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), as well as promote rights-based approaches. However, such an approach was not unproblematic. The relevance and credibility of designing a post-2015 framework with new or more goals could be challenged if important parts of the existing MDG framework had not been achieved. A set of representative goals—particularly if they were global goals—might be difficult to negotiate if there were too many actors, too many conflicting interests that were too hard to quantify. There were also already a plethora of numerous frameworks, initiatives, agreements and consensus documents that guided international relations and helped international actors deliver development cooperation or address global challenges. In this light, the Millennium Declaration could prove sufficient, on its own, to guide development policies and international cooperation.

The consultation also set out various options regarding the possible scope of a new framework, including: continuing the existing MDG framework without changing the goals, targets, indicators and instruments, but setting a new timeline; continuing on from the existing MDG framework but with new goals, targets, indicators and instruments; a new approach to development, for instance going beyond development policies, development cooperation and ODA, towards a more comprehensive international agenda. The European Commission is due to publish next spring the European Report on Development (ERD) 2012–2013—*Development in a Changing World: Elements for a Post-2015 Global Agenda,* which will help the EU to develop plans after 2015.[18]

4.3 UK and the Post-2015 Agenda

On 23 October 2012, the Minister of State for International Development, Alan Duncan, in a debate on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, set out the challenges that would accompany attempts to create a new development framework to replace the MDGs:

> First, there are clear questions around what should be included in a post-2015 framework for development and how each issue should be measured. Given that some of the MDGs under the current framework are unlikely to be reached by 2015, some argue that the goals should simply be rolled forward post-2015. However, that would collide with the fact that a number of important issues such as conflict, corruption, poor governance and climate change were not included in

---

[18] See: http://www.erd-report.eu/erd/report_2012/index.html.

the MDGs in the first place. Simply rolling forward the current goals would ignore the importance of quality as well as quantity in the development process.

Secondly, although this is covered in part by MDG 7, there is a view that the MDGs should be replaced by a framework focusing much more on environmental sustainability and not just on poverty eradication. Our ability to manage environmental risks and use natural resources sustainably is critical to increasing the living standards of the poorest people in the world, but would such a shift risk losing the sharp focus of the current set of goals?

Thirdly, there is an argument for adopting development goals that apply to emerging and rich countries as well as the poorest countries. The actions of the rich—for instance, on carbon emissions, which have been mentioned—should not perhaps be allowed to damage the interests of the poor.[19]

He then set out what principles should be embodied in the post-2015 agenda:

First, poverty eradication should remain at the centre of a new global framework for development. Secondly, any new framework needs to speed up efforts to reach the targets in the current MDGs, and hold governments to account for the promises that were made to achieve them. Thirdly, it should tackle the root causes of poverty, not just the symptoms. Fourthly, it must be based on, and take account of, the views of the poorest people in the world. Finally, simplicity is essential. The new framework should be bold and ambitious, but must maintain the clarity of the current MDGs.[20]

The Government has also highlighted the importance of business in the post-2015 agenda. On the Business Fights Poverty blog, the Secretary of State for International Development, Justine Greening, in an article on the Department for International Development (DfID), business and the post-2015 agenda, stated:

At every level of the business spectrum—from the lone trader to the multinational—business is creating employment, generating incomes and delivering essential services for the poorest individuals and households. As a principal source of tax revenues for country governments, business is also the largest component of the economy and a key driver of economic growth. My department's core focus is to reduce poverty through helping to drive economic growth and create jobs for the poorest and most vulnerable people. Working with businesses both big and small forms a crucial part of this mission. The coalition government has over the last two years intensified its work with business in the battle against poverty.[21]

The previous Secretary of State for International Development, Andrew Mitchell, had similarly stated: "The coalition government believes that building open societies and open economies, fighting corruption and harnessing private sector investment is vital for poverty reduction and human development. This, for us, is the golden thread of development".[22]

---

[19] HC *Hansard*, 23 October 2012, col 234WH.
[20] HC *Hansard*, 23 October 2012, col 238WH.
[21] See: DfID, Business and the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
[22] DfID Press Release, *MDGs: Prime Minister to Co-chair UN Panel on Development*, (9 May 2012).

More recently, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, who, as noted above is one of the three co-chairs of the UN High Level Panel looking into the post-2015 development agenda, stated the following after the second meeting of the Panel in London at the beginning of November:

> First, we agreed that the principle aim of the Panel should be to focus on finishing the job of ending extreme poverty. We think the Millennium Development Goals have made great progress. There is more progress to be made between now and 2015, but we are clear the next stage should be aiming to eradicate absolute poverty in our world. That is something politicians have been talking about for a while, but for the first time I believe this generation really has the opportunity to do it.
>
> Second, we discussed how we might press on and tackle the causes of poverty as well as its symptoms. For me, that means rights for women and minorities, a free media, integrity in government and the freedom to participate in society. It means paying real attention to what I call the 'golden thread' of the conditions that help move people and countries from poverty to wealth. The absence of conflict and corruption, the presence of the rule of law, property rights, strong institutions: those are the things that can help us build more prosperous countries, more prosperous societies.
>
> Now, the UK is clear that this new approach will help create the conditions in which open societies and open economies are able to thrive. Because it's only when people have a job and a voice that they can take control of their own destiny and build a future free from poverty.[23]

5. Other General Observations on the Post-2015 Agenda

Over the past twelve months, a wide range of materials have been produced from a range of institutions and organisations regarding the possible direction of the post-2015 agenda. This section considers general views on how such discussions should unfold. Section 6 covers specific aspects of the emerging development agenda.

5.1 Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

The ODI's report, *Post-2015: The Road Ahead*, published in October 2012, sketched out possible routes for the post-2015 agenda. It suggested that it should focus attention on those who had been 'left behind' by progress towards the current goals. Inequality and social exclusion therefore needed to be built into a new agreement, with new initiatives on jobs, agriculture and infrastructure to create the conditions for long-term progress. A sustainability agenda might also be built into these new objectives. The report suggested that poor people defined poverty more broadly than the current MDGs would suggest, and as such, a post-2015 agreement could incorporate broader concerns, such as the fear of violence, the desire for political freedoms, or the importance of risk and vulnerability. A new agreement could also include new goals for countries or institutions, such as addressing how institutions work or global environmental problems.

5.2 Oxfam

In October 2012, Oxfam published *How Can a Post-2015 Agreement Drive Real Change?*. It argued that there needed to be a move away from the MDG focus upon the

---

[23] Downing Street Press Release, *UN High Level Press Statements*, (2 November 2012).

aid system, because aid was becoming less important, both because it was likely to decline in volume over the next few years, and because governments' dependence on aid as a percentage of revenues was falling even faster than aid itself. Instead, the paper argued that the focus post-2015 should be upon instruments that could: change national norms in areas such as women's rights; directly influence government decision making, through any of a number of possible carrots (aid, contracts, acceptance, approval) or sticks (sanctions, disapproval); give civil society organisations and other domestic actors more tools with which to lobby, campaign, and secure action by their governments. It suggested a number of instruments that might achieve this: global goals and targets, as encapsulated by the MDGs; regional goals and targets on areas such as the rights of women, social protection and water and sanitation; global league tables which could hold national governments to account; data transparency that would lead to improved quality, collection and dissemination of social data that could be re-used by national or regional bodies and international institutions; international laws which could impact on national "common sense" (eg children's rights) and influence governments if they wanted to ratify and legislate, or report publicly on their performance.

5.3 ActionAid

In September 2012, ActionAid published *Righting the MDGs: Contexts and Opportunities for a Post-2015 Development Framework*. It highlighted the fact that a number of MDG targets had been met or were on track to be met by 2015 and acknowledged that the MDGs had become a focal point for governments, civil society organisations and business to rally around. However, ActionAid believed that the goals lacked ambition. For instance, halving, rather than eradicating, poverty "still leaves a lot of people very poor and hungry even if it's achieved", while MDG 2 on education drove increased enrolment in primary education but did not require a concomitant improvement in education equality. The MDGs also did not address the root causes of poverty, most especially women's inequality and aggregated national data masked such inequalities. Issues such as the rise in food prices and the effects of climate change, such as flooding, and the depletion of natural resources meant that any new framework needed to address sustainability and energy use. The financial crisis and global economic downturn, which had led to a fall in overseas aid from developed countries, highlighted the need for economic leadership from G-20 countries and banking reform. There was also a need to acknowledge a shift in international power, especially to the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China), which in future would require a greater emphasis placed on development cooperation between low-income countries and emerging economies. While progress in poverty had been made, many still remained trapped in it, while those who had been lifted out of it were often on the margins of society, especially in fragile states, where small changes threatened to return them to their previous state. Inequality and discrimination, especially against women, were particular challenges that exacerbated these problems.

ActionAid argued that any new framework had to include "a transformative and human rights based approach, in order to remove those structural barriers and help people lift themselves out of poverty". ActionAid also thought that the new framework had to take into account the developing sustainable development goals (SDGs) agenda (see below), to avoid competing frameworks. More specifically it listed a series of issues that needed to be taken into account: human rights, equality and gender; reassert those MDGs that had not been met and a ramping up of ambition; environmental sustainability; a framework that was universally applicable, adaptable and accountable; a focus on developing new and more sustainable financing for development; progressive domestic taxation within developing countries and the prevention of international tax evasion and avoidance by multinational companies and wealthy individuals.

5.4 Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives

The Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives, which brought together a number of civil society activists and scholars from different disciplines from around the globe, published its report, *No Future Without Justice*, in July 2012. The report found that the: "dominant model of development and economic progress that is oriented on a technocratic modernisation path, is blind to human rights and the ecological limits of the global ecosystem, confuses growth of Gross Domestic Product with progress in society, and regards poverty as a primarily technical challenge in which categories of inequality and social justice are neglected". It elaborated key themes around: fundamental principles and rights; recognition of the limits to the Earth's ecosystem and the need for global sustainability goals; a reorientation of justice as a concept; and the strengthening of democratic governance at national and global levels. From these themes, the report set out six core goals and associated targets:

Core Goal 1: Dignity and Human Rights for All
Targets on: Poverty eradication; Full employment; Decent work; Social security; Food security; Water / sanitation; Housing; Health, including reproductive health; Education; Cultural diversity; Fundamental freedoms (movement, religion, thought, speech, information, association, sexual orientation); Anti-discrimination laws
Core Goal 2: Promote Equality and Justice
Targets on: Gender equality and equity and women's empowerment; Income and wealth (Gini coefficient or similar measure)
Core Goal 3: Respect for Nature and the Planetary Boundaries
Targets on: Ecological footprint; Climate change / per capita greenhouse gas emissions; Rate of biodiversity loss; Nitrogen input to the biosphere; Global freshwater use; Change in land use; Ocean acidification; Interference with the global phosphorous cycle; Ozone depletion; Chemical pollution; Deforestation; Renewable energy; Energy consumption; Resource / energy efficiency (Factor Five); Total resource accounting
Core Goal 4: Building Peace through Disarmament
Targets on: Abolition of nuclear weapons; Reduction of production and trade of arms (including small weapons); Reduction of military expenditures
Core Goal 5: Foster Fair and Resilient Financial Systems
Targets on: Macroeconomic imbalances; Global currency mechanism to prevent volatile fluctuations and competitive devaluations; Illicit financial flows; Transparency of financial flows; Debt sustainability; Environmentally and socially harmful subsidies; Harmful tax competition; Total economic valuation of Foreign Direct Investment and TNC activities; Participatory and gender budgets
Core Goal 6: Strengthen Democratic and Participatory Governance
Targets on: Access to participation in decision-making for all (at all levels); Access to complaint mechanisms (ombuds-mechanisms) for all in case of rights violations or violations of rights of future generations at all levels of governance; Full citizen rights for residents and eradication of discriminatory practices against immigrants, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; Citizen empowerment

6. Specific Issues in the Post-2015 Debate

6.1 Ensuring that the Voices of the Poorest are heard in the Post-2015 Agenda

Many organisations have been concerned that as the development agenda unfolds the voices of the poorest are not ignored. The ONE Campaign, for instance, in its briefing, *What Does the World Really Want from the Next Global Development Goals?*, published in September 2012, wondered whether the formal and informal UN-led processes "will truly capture what the global development goals' target audience actually wants—that is to say, the priorities and concerns of the world's poorest people". There was "a risk that the next generation of global goals will be dominated by specific interest group agendas". The briefing suggested that much could be made of existing survey data from the world's poorest and developing countries, that a new global survey could be commissioned to elicit views from a range of households, including the poorest and most marginalised, and that an independent selection of UN representatives could ensure that the perspectives of ordinary citizens (versus interest or issue groups) were truly represented.[24]

6.2 Eradicating Hunger and Malnutrition and Ensuring Food and Nutrition Security

In May 2015, the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda published *Imagining a World Free from Hunger: Ending Hunger and Malnutrition and Ensuring Food and Nutrition Security*, which sought to stress the continuing importance of ending hunger and malnutrition as a critical prerequisite for sustainable development. It noted that though important progress has been made toward halving the proportion of people who suffered from hunger, more needed to be done. While the proportion of those suffering from hunger had gone down, the absolute numbers showed little sign of decline; nearly a billion people were hungry and more than two billion suffered micronutrient deficiencies that cost lives, livelihoods and economic growth. In addition, despite increased assistance, the level of resources spent on agricultural development and food and nutrition security remained wholly inadequate for the scale of the challenge. Though global agricultural production was sufficient to meet the world's needs there were critical imbalances in consumption patterns and in access to land, other natural resources, finance, markets and distribution networks. This was having an adverse impact upon maternal and infant health. Stunting was preventing nearly 200 million children from attaining their full development potential, while under-nutrition was the cause of an estimated 35 percent of all deaths among children under five years of age and maternal and child under-nutrition accounted for 11 percent of the global disease burden. Progress was also uneven. There were also new emerging challenges. High and volatile food prices had already stalled advances across MDGs closely linked with food and nutrition security, in particular putting food out of the reach of poor households and undermining efforts to eradicate poverty. Rates of growth in agricultural productivity were declining, often the result of longstanding under-investment in research and development and land degradation. Other challenges which put pressure on food production included: water scarcity; fuel price rises, which translated directly to higher costs for fertiliser, agricultural mechanisation and transportation; climate change and natural disasters; increasing population growth and urbanisation.

The think piece then argued that a new bold goal to eradicate hunger could build on past progress and focus the global community on scaling up proven solutions to meet current and emerging challenges. It could help educate and empower the agricultural labour force in developing countries, by building rural skills, increasing investment in agriculture research, development, particularly in climate-smart, sustainable agricultural

---

[24] See also: Involve, *A Global Development Framework after 2015: Engaging Poor People in its Formulation*, (September 2011).

intensification. This could combat the double burden of malnutrition, strengthen resilience and provide safety nets and social protection. Progress could be tracked against a practical and comprehensive suite of situational, outcome and sustainability indicators that embraced the multi-dimensional nature of hunger and food and nutrition security. This could include issues such as access to land, food production, food utilisation and its stabilisation. If tracked by sex, age and rural-urban location it could identify and address the most persistent pockets of hunger and malnutrition. Targets could be national or regional and address particular circumstances, needs and challenges and complement a global goal and suite of indicators. Such targets and indicators would enable individual countries to reach realistic objectives using common indicators aligned with their own national plans and strategies and appropriate to the initial conditions and level of hunger and malnutrition they faced. Such targets and indicators could also help identify gaps in legal, policy and institutional frameworks, capacity, financing and innovation and facilitate the establishment of an enabling environment for achieving and new hunger and malnutrition targets.

6.3 Persistence of Poverty and Inequality Post-2015

Thomas Pogge, in an article published in April 2012, *Poverty, Human Rights and the Global Order: Framing the Post-2015 Agenda*, questioned whether progress on ensuring that fewer individuals were living on less than $1.25 a day, a target under MDG 1, adequately tracked persistent poverty and inequality. He noted that the World Bank's figures showed that "over one third of all human beings—2471 million—live on less each day than what $2 could buy in the US in 2005". He argued that inequality was emphasised by the fact that "a mere 1.2 percent of the income of the richest tenth of humanity, which collectively receive nearly 70 percent of global household income" could help raise the living standards of those 2471 million people to the level of what $2 a day could buy in the US in 2005. He was also highly critical of the way the World Bank was measuring under-nourishment, another target under MDG 1. This, he maintained, also reflected the ability of powerful nations to shape what extreme poverty meant, whilst ignoring existing structures that reinforced inequality. He argued that if poverty and inequality were to form part of a post-2015 framework a number of things would have to change. Firstly, the extent of severe poverty would have to be measured by comparing it not to the severe poverty of the past, which helped normalise the existence of people living in poverty, but to severe poverty that was currently unavoidable. Secondly, responses to poverty should not be confined to development assistance, but become a mainstream problem so that the imperative of poverty avoidance was taken into account in all political decisions about the design of national and supranational social institutions and policies. Thirdly, he was against detached goals that committed nobody to anything in particular and instead supported "a determinate assignment of concrete responsibilities that manifests an international cooperative plan to eradicate severe poverty with all deliberate speed".[25]

6.4 Health After 2015

The UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda devoted one of its thematic think pieces to health, *Health in the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda*, (May 2015). It began by noting what had been achieved. In many low and middle income countries health progress over the past decade had been impressive. Child and maternal mortality had declined at unprecedented rates in many countries, and demonstrable progress had been made in the fight against major infectious diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. However, many countries would not meet the MDG targets and

---

[25] See also: UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Addressing Inequalities—The Heart of the Post-2015 Agenda and the Future We Want for All: Thematic Think Piece*, (May 2012).

much remained to be done beyond 2015, particularly in the lowest income countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia and in countries affected by conflict. Part of the explanation for this stagnation in progress lay in a failure to reach the most vulnerable populations, as national indicators for the MDGs often masked increasing inequities within countries. Current investment levels in health, including sexual and reproductive health, were in many countries not sufficient, efficient nor equitable, which challenged the belief that health had benefitted disproportionately in terms of the level of resources received over the last ten years. There were also concerns that dramatic gains such as the survival of people living with HIV or the reductions in malaria or measles mortality could not be sustained. There were challenges posed by a complex burden of infectious diseases alongside non-communicable diseases, mental health, injuries through conflict and new emerging infectious disease outbreaks and epidemics. In addition, there were the issues of ageing populations and increasing health costs as technology improved. Going forward, any new health goal needed to build on the MDGs and the values embodied in the Millennium Declaration. The Declaration continued to provide a clear and valid expression of the core values that should continue to underpin development in coming decades. The MDGs had been successful because they focused on results in terms of human development outcomes contained in a framework with clear, concise and measurable objectives. The post-2015 framework therefore needed to include concrete goals, targets and indicators, though a longer time horizon, with intermediate milestones might be required. However, any new agenda had to take on new approaches. New goals and targets had to be inclusive and based on wide consultation with stakeholders from the outset otherwise it would be difficult to develop a clear set of goals, targets and indicators. While global goals helped underpin global solidarity they needed to be adapted to the needs of individual countries which required a greater attention to means and intermediate processes, with targets and indicators, focusing on policy coherence without becoming prescriptive to policy makers and taking into account that national realities are diverse. Health goals also had to be linked to a much wider nexus of relationships, such as macroeconomic stability, decent work, food security, inequality, governance, gender, human rights, demographic transition, urbanization, migration peace and security, natural disasters and science and technology. The think piece also suggested that under an overarching health goal there needed to be a hierarchy of more sectoral and programme specific goals, targets and indicators that for instance could reflect existing agreements (including the current MDGs) and new issues that were emerging on the health agenda.

6.5 Continuing Importance of Education Post-2015

In August 2012, the Results for Development Institute and the ODI published *Post-2015 Education MDGs*. The report evaluated progress in reaching the current MDGs 2 and 3, which seek to ensure that by 2015 all children everywhere are able to complete a full course of primary schooling and eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education. It found that huge progress had been made towards meeting the two education MDGs, using the official MDG indicators. Even countries currently not on track had demonstrated positive progress and more progress had been made on education than on the health goals, and the gender parity education goal had registered the most progress of all eight MDGs. At the same time, the primary education MDG would not be met by the target date of 2015, though it would on present progress largely be achieved by 2025. However, the report noted a number of continuing issues and challenges. Firstly, after the rapid expansion of basic education enrolment, there was an increasing concern about the quality of education, with growing evidence that those in primary school were not mastering their curricula and also that existing statistical measures of progress were insufficient. Secondly, there were developments within education that were placing enormous pressure on ministers of education—especially rapidly growing secondary and tertiary enrolment rates. Thirdly, there were developments outside

education that were having important impacts on education. These included: the growing global middle class creating a huge demand for secondary and tertiary education; rising inequality within countries generating concern about equity within education; pervasive unemployment sparking a debate about the need for both more vocational education and for complementing formal curricula with skills that would equip students for employment. The report called for urgent mechanisms to ensure that developing countries were involved in discussions about education post-2015, with UNESCO taking a leading role. Future goals had to be well defined if they were to be achieved, even if more widely drawn aspirations were more likely to gain consensus. They needed to concentrate on equity and the poorest, with any new goals explicitly measured for each quintile, as "one of the major problems of the current goals is that their monitoring has focused more on averages than on the performance of the poorest". Finally, there was a need for indicators and measures to be meaningful.[26]

6.6 Gender Post-2015

A briefing issued by the Gender and Development Network in July 2012, *Gender Equality and the Post-2015 Framework*, considered the role of gender in development after 2015. It noted the progress that had been made. Gender gaps in girls' enrolment in primary education had closed in almost all countries, women were living longer and having fewer children and there had been increases in women's participation in the labour market in almost every region of the world. However, a number of challenges remained. Women were estimated to account for two-thirds of the 1.4 billion people globally who lived in extreme poverty. Part of this poverty was linked to inequality. This included: women's and girls' social roles as care-givers and managers of household food security; the unequal gender distribution and control of resources (land, property and financial capital); constraints on women's socio-economic mobility due to cultural, legal and labour market barriers; gender-based violence; and women's lack of decision-making power. Such gender disparities could leave poor women and girls disproportionately vulnerable to shocks—such as rising food or fuel prices or environmental disasters—because they often had fewer assets to cushion them. The briefing also pointed to reports by the OECD, UNESCO, UNDP, the World Bank and ODI, which all stressed the importance of achieving the third MDG goal of gender equality as a prerequisite to progress on the other MDGs.[27] For instance, gender disparities impacted upon child mortality and child malnourishment rates.

The briefing proposed that a new post-2015 framework should focus on the most marginalised people in society, recognising that the majority of these people were female. It would reflect an understanding that women's poverty is, in part, a result of their socially enforced gender roles and relations and that, without specifically addressing the causes of gender inequality, women's poverty would persist. It called for gender to be mainstreamed throughout any new development framework which should include: agreed specific targets under each goal that reflected the gender barriers women and girls face; developed gender sensitive indicators, based primarily on need rather than availability of data; provision of incentives within targets and indicators to reach the poorest and most marginalised people in society, explicitly including women from socially excluded groups; ensuring that all indicators are disaggregated by sex; substantially increasing the availability of data disaggregated by sex. It also called for a specific

---

[26] See also: UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Education and Skills for Inclusive and Sustainable Development Beyond 2015: Thematic Think Piece*, (May 2012).

[27] See: ODI, *After 2015: Progress and Challenges for Development*, (2011); OECD, *Gender Inequality and the MDGs: What are the Missing Dimensions?*, (2010); UNESCO, *Gender Equality: The Missing Link? Rethinking the Internationally Agreed Development Goals beyond 2015*, (2010); World Bank, *Gender Equality & the Millennium Development Goals*, (2003).

gender goal that: prioritised the poorest and most marginalised women and girls; reflected the priorities of these women themselves; met their long-term strategic interests by tackling the roots of gender inequality; reflected commitments already made under existing international agreements.

6.7 Macroeconomic Stability, Inclusive Growth and Employment

In May 2012, the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda published *Macroeconomic Stability, Inclusive Growth and Employment*. It started with the backdrop to these issues. Around 900 million adults in the developing world were unable to earn enough to keep their families above the US$ 2-a-day per person poverty line, while 200 million people were unemployed globally, among them 75 million young people. Hundreds of millions more worked long hours, often under inhumane conditions and with no job security in the informal economy. This was important as productive and decent employment was the most important source of income security. However, to generate decent employment at the required scale, countries would have to achieve sustained and inclusive growth, which in turn critically depended on supportive macroeconomic policies. Many of these issues had been negatively affected by the financial crisis, which emphasised the damaging impacts on living standards that could result from macroeconomic instability.

To make progress, inclusive and sustainable development would depend on the integration of growth-promoting macroeconomic policies, with developmental industrial policies and redistributive measures, all geared towards the creation of decent employment. These elements had to be combined with a social protection framework aimed at eliminating the causes of poverty and exclusion—such as dispossession from land, poor housing, education and health provision. Explicit targets for macroeconomic stability were not recommended, as they encompassed a wide-spectrum of sub-issues which were difficult to unpack and which were often country specific. Instead, such elements could be included as critical conditioning factors highly relevant to a post-2015 development agenda. A similar recommendation was made regarding inclusive growth and it was noted that many of the elements necessary for inclusive growth were included in the existing MDGs, notably investments in education and health. However, it was suggested that employment creation lent itself more readily to explicit targeting and should reaffirm international commitments with regard to work being seen as a fundamental human right. There was also a need to collect and use gender disaggregated data and track the growth of decent work and the trend movement from agriculture to other sectors.

6.8 Changing Nature of Aid, Donors and Recipients

The ODI's paper, *Horizon 2025: Creative Destruction in the Aid Industry*, published in July 2012, sought to map out the changing dynamics of aid flows and how in the future this would change the development landscape. The report projected that: "by 2025, the locus of global poverty will overwhelmingly be in fragile, mainly low-income and African, states, contrary to current policy preoccupations with the transitory phenomenon of poverty concentration in middle-income countries". This would be against a backdrop of a smaller available share of industrialised country income than ever before to potentially close the remaining global poverty gap and an increase in South-South sources for development. In addition, as this happened, new institutions, business models and practices would challenge long-established 'aid industry' actors. The report concluded that this would raise important questions for those agencies currently providing development finance for improved social welfare, for mutual self-interest in growth and trade and for the provision of global public goods. It would also raise challenges for

Lower Income Countries in terms of their resilience in the wake of such changes in international development flows.

6.9 From Old "Development Goals" to New "One-World Goals"

Mukesh Kapila, Professor for Global Health and Humanitarian Affairs at Manchester University, in article posted on the UNICEF website, *Development Beyond 2015: New One-World Goals for Critical Global Challenges*, argued that any future model of development had to move away from a paternalistic and aid-dependent view of development to one that sought to enable "everyone to take responsibility to lead productive and creative lives with dignity, and to realise their fundamental human rights while fulfilling their obligations to relate respectfully to others". Such development would only be sustainable if achieved through a longer-term outlook built around the responsible use of resources to create and share wealth fairly so that everyone's reasonable current needs were met without compromising the needs of future generations. To help engender this, Professor Kapila set out twelve potential one-world goals. Four sought to allow individuals to achieve their fuller potential: adequate livelihoods and income levels for dignified human existence; sufficient food and water for active living; appropriate education and skills for productive participation in society; good health for the best possible physical and mental well-being. The next four aimed to protect and promote collective human capital: security for ensuring freedom from violence; gender equality for enabling males and females to participate and benefit equally in society; resilient communities and nations for reduced disaster impact from natural and technological hazards; connectivity for access to essential information, services, and opportunities. The last four centred on the effective provision of global public goods: empowerment of people for realising their civil and political rights; sustainable management of the biosphere for enabling people and the planet to thrive together; rules on running the world economy for the fairly shared benefit of all nations; good global governance for transparent and accountable international institutions and partnerships.[28]

6.10 Democracy and Democratic Accountability Post-2015

In August 2012 the UNDP published *Measuring Democracy and Democratic Governance in a Post-2015 Development Framework*. It sought to unpick the various issues and challenges that would be posed if democracy were to become a part of the development agenda. Democratic governance was not one of the MDGs and its absence reflected that, in contrast to economic and social issues, democratic governance as a universal goal was a difficult concept to unpack because it meant different things to different people. However, previous reports by the UNDP had highlighted that governance was a missing element in the achievement and sustainability of the MDGs.[29] There were also difficulties in measuring good governance, as there were no internationally agreed standards in terms of indicators, data or methodologies to collect or analyse them. However, the UNDP and various regional organisations and institutions did have experience of measuring forms of democracy, corruption and human rights which could help lay the basis for a more wide-ranging consensus that could underpin a more global

---

[28] Other authors have stressed the importance of equality and human rights in any new framework. See for example: Alicia Ely Yamin, Director of the Program on Health Rights of Women and Children at the Francois-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard University, *Post MDGs: What Next for a Global Development Agenda that Takes Human Rights Seriously?*.

[29] See UNDP: *The Path to Achieving the MDGs: A Synthesis of Evidence from around the World*, (2010) and UNDP, *Beyond the Midpoint: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*, (2010). The UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda has also produced a thematic think piece, *Governance and Development*, (May 2012).

goal and set of indicators.[30] There were also examples of cross-country democratic measurement initiatives that could help inform such work.[31] There were a number of possible solutions. One might be a global goal, such as strengthening democratic governance, with a number of national indicators that countries could define themselves according to national circumstances. Such indicators could include: inclusive participation; responsive governing institutions; democratic governance practices grounded in human rights; gender equality; anti-corruption. Another approach might be to have regional targets, selected by regional organisations such as the African Union or ASEAN, which would allow countries to contextualise national indicators to regional circumstances. Another could be national targets with national indicators that would allow targets and indicators to be sensitive and reflective of democratic deficits in a particular country.

6.11 Saferworld: Peace and Security

In a discussion paper published in September 2012, *Approaching Post-2015 from a Peace Perspective*, Saferwold argued for the inclusion of peace-building issues into a post-2015 development framework. It pointed to evidence from reports such as the World Bank's *World Development Report* (2011) and the Institute for Economics and Peace's *Structures of Peace* (2011), which highlighted the importance of addressing violence, corruption and state fragility if development goals were to be achieved, especially in transition states. For instance, the World Development Report had observed that no low income conflict state or fragile state had achieved a single MDG. Saferworld argued that that the MDGs did not cover core elements of the peace building frameworks it regarded as essential. It set out a number of issues that needed to be explored for inclusion in a post-2015 framework: all social groups have access to decent livelihoods; all states are able to manage revenues and perform core functions effectively and accountably; all social groups can participate in decisions that affect society; all social groups have equal access to justice; all social groups have access to fair, accountable social service delivery; all social groups feel secure; the international community is effectively addressing the external stresses that lead to conflict.[32]

6.12 Role of Private Foundations, Business and Philanthropy Post-2015

In August 2012, the Institute of Development Studies published *Private Foundations, Business and Developing a Post-2015 Framework*. It argued that philanthropic foundations and businesses needed to be integrated into discussions about the post-2015 agenda alongside civil society, national governments and multilateral organisations. In respect of current importance, it quoted figures for 2010 that showed in terms of financial flows to developing countries that: $514.3 billion came from foreign direct investment; $128.5 billion from overseas development assistance; and $56 billion from philanthropic sources. It believed that there were a number of barriers that inhibited

---

[30] For example, data is collected by organisations such as Freedom House, Polity, Transparency International and the Economist Intelligence Unit, while assessments of governance and corruption are made by organisations such as the Council of Europe, the African Union and the OECD.

[31] Examples include: The World Bank Institute's World Governance Indicators; the Corruption Perceptions Index and Global Integrity Index; the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index; the Bertlesmann Transformation Index; various regional barometer surveys, such as the Eurobarometer Survey; databases maintained by organisations such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

[32] See: ODI, *Security: The Missing Bottom of the Millennium Development Goals? Prospects for Inclusion in the Post-MDG Development Framework*, (August 2012), which offers a review of various proposals from a number of international bodies who have argued that security issues must form a part of the post-2015 development agenda. See also: UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Peace and Security: Thematic Think Piece*, (May 2012).

more input from philanthropic foundations and businesses that could be overcome by: encouraging cooperation on individual MDGs; transferring project ownership and management to private actors where it was deserved; improving knowledge transfer and decreasing project duplication; creating a common set of performance metrics. There were also specific things that various actors could do. Donor agencies needed to: continue reform and reduce corruption; constantly renegotiate and reaffirm their framing of the problems and their right to manage the solutions; respect partners that have different ways of creating legitimacy; tolerate that their partners will come closer or pull away depending on whether they gain or lose legitimacy with their constituents. Private foundations needed to: continue investing in innovative and risky projects; ensure that projects help strengthen national systems; fund projects further away from home; work more closely with local civil society organisations, other foundations and the private sector. Businesses needed to: use their influence to strengthen national government systems instead of bypassing them; use their local knowledge and market-finding abilities to identify local demand for aid; learn from aid agencies' best practices and avoid duplicating existing development projects; participate in industry associations and global funds for development or collaborate with other actors as part of official aid programmes.[33]

7. Rio+20 Conference and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Alongside discussion of the MDGs and the post-2015 agenda, the UN also began work towards a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs). On 24 December 2009, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution in which it decided to organise, in 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development at the highest possible level. The Conference, including Heads of State and Government and high level representatives, met at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, between 20 and 22 June 2012. One of the outcomes of the Conference was a document, *The Future We Want*. The document inter alia sought to: launch a process to establish sustainable development goals; detail how the green economy could be used as a tool to achieve sustainable development; strengthen the UN Environment Programme and establish a new forum for sustainable development; promote corporate sustainability reporting measures; take steps to go beyond GDP to assess the well-being of a country; develop a strategy for sustainable development financing; adopt a framework for tackling sustainable consumption and production; focus on improving gender equality; stress the need to engage civil society and incorporate science into policy; and recognise the importance of voluntary commitments on sustainable development.[34] The outcome document was subsequently endorsed by a resolution (A/RES/66/288), with some reservations, by the UN General Assembly in July 2012.[35]

A number of writers have argued that it would be advantageous to integrate the SDGs in a process alongside the MDGs and the post-2015 agenda. For instance, some have argued that poverty eradication will be intimately linked to issues such as environmental protection and sustainable consumption and production.[36] Writers have maintained that

---

[33] See also ODI, *Post-2015 MDGs: What Role for Business?*, (July 2012).

[34] See: UN Press Release, *Rio+20 Concludes with Big Package of Commitments for Action and Agreement by World Leaders on Path for a Sustainable Future*, (June 2012).

[35] See: UN Press Release, *Despite Reservations, General Assembly Endorses Rio+20 Outcome Document; Will Study Modalities for Its Implementation, Budgetary Implications*, (July 2012).

[36] See: Ikuho Miyazawa, 'What are Sustainable Development Goals?', *Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) Issue Brief*, (March 2012); German Development Institute, *The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Breaking New Ground for a Global Framework*, (September 2012); Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development, *International*

developing SDGs and the post-2015 agenda separately would be inefficient and short-sighted and miss important linkages between poverty and sustainable development.[37] Support for a convergence between the SDGs and the post-2015 agenda which built on the progress made by the MDGs became evident in a number of UN briefings in the lead up to the Rio+20 Conference.[38] In October 2012, following on from the Rio+20 Conference, a number of special events began to be convened at the UN to discuss "Conceptualising a Set of Sustainable Development Goals". The key questions that panellists were asked to consider were: how the SDGs could complement the MDGs and be integrated into the post-2015 agenda; how the SDGs could balance the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development; and how to develop universally applicable goals that take into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development.[39]

Institutions and New Sustainable Development Goals Beyond 2015: Climate Change, Poor and Vulnerable Countries, (September 2012).

[37] Beyond 2015, *Sustainable Development Goals and the Relationship to a Post-2015 Global Development Framework: A Beyond 2015 Discussion Paper*, (March 2012).

[38] See for example: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Briefing with UN Delegates on Post-2015 Development Agenda*, (February 2012).

[39] See: UN, *Conceptualizing a Set of Sustainable Development Goals A Special Event of the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly*, (October 2012) and UN, *Summary of the Special Event of the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly Conceptualizing a Set of Sustainable Development Goals*, (October 2012).

Appendix

MDGs and Accompanying Targets

Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty

Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day

Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people

Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality

Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health

Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases

Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it

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

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

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

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

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

Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

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

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

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)

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

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

Target 8.F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications
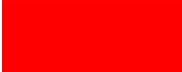
For further details see: http://www.mdgmonitor.org/browse_goal.cfm.

Statistics Division, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Millennium Development Goals—2012 Progress Chart

Goals and Targets	Africa				Asia				
	Northern	Sub-Saharan	Eastern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Oceania	Latin America & Caribbean	Caucasus & Central Asia
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger									
Reduce extreme poverty by half	low poverty	very high poverty	moderate poverty	high poverty	very high poverty	low poverty	very high poverty	moderate poverty	low poverty
Productive and decent employment	large deficit in decent work	very large deficit in decent work	large deficit in decent work	large deficit in decent work	very large deficit in decent work	large deficit in decent work	very large deficit in decent work	moderate deficit in decent work	moderate deficit in decent work
Reduce hunger by half	low hunger	very high hunger	moderate hunger	moderate hunger	high hunger	moderate hunger	moderate hunger	moderate hunger	moderate hunger
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education									
Universal primary schooling	high enrolment	moderate enrolment	high enrolment	high enrolment	high enrolment	high enrolment	-	high enrolment	high enrolment
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women									
Equal girls' enrolment in primary school	close to parity	close to parity	parity	parity	parity	close to parity	close to parity	parity	parity
Women's share of paid employment	low share	medium share	high share	medium share	low share	low share	medium share	high share	high share
Women's equal representation in national parliaments	low representation	moderate representation	moderate representation	low representation	low representation	low representation	very low representation	moderate representation	low representation
Goals and Targets	Northern	Sub-Saharan	Eastern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Oceania	Latin America & Caribbean	Caucasus & Central Asia
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases									
Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	low incidence	high incidence	low incidence	low incidence	low incidence	low incidence	low incidence	low incidence	low incidence
Halt and reverse the spread of tuberculosis	low mortality	high mortality	low mortality	moderate mortality	moderate mortality	low mortality	high mortality	low mortality	moderate mortality

28

Goals and Targets	Africa				Asia		Oceania	Latin America & Caribbean	Caucasus & Central Asia
	Northern	Sub-Saharan	Eastern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western			
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability									
Halve proportion of population without improved drinking water	high coverage	low coverage	high coverage	moderate coverage	high coverage	moderate coverage	low coverage	high coverage	moderate coverage
Halve proportion of population without sanitation	high coverage	very low coverage	low coverage	low coverage	very low coverage	moderate coverage	low coverage	moderate coverage	high coverage
Improve the lives of slum-dwellers	moderate proportion of slum-dwellers	very high proportion of slum-dwellers	moderate proportion of slum-dwellers	high proportion of slum-dwellers	high proportion of slum-dwellers	moderate proportion of slum-dwellers	moderate proportion of slum-dwellers	moderate proportion of slum-dwellers	-
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development									
Internet users	high usage	moderate usage	high usage	moderate usage	low usage	high usage	low usage	high usage	high usage

This progress chart operates on two levels. The words in each box indicate the present degree of compliance with the target. The colours show progress towards the target according to the legend below:

For the regional groupings and country data, see: http://mdgs.un.org/. Country experiences in each region may differ significantly from the regional average. Due to new data and revised methodologies, this Progress Chart is not comparable with previous versions.